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A *S.A. 1832.*

BRIEF VIEW

OF

SACRED HISTORY

FROM THE

Creation of the World

TO THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM BY THE ROMANS.



BY ESTHER COPLEY,

AUTHOR OF COTTAGE COMFORTS, ETC.

LONDON:

WILLIAM DARTON AND SON,

HOLBORN HILL.

1831.

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Third—and of Dr. Willis, who was *physician to King George the Third*—and you would say, Then it is very plain there was such a person as King George the Third—and looking again at the history, you would find that it mentioned Buonaparte, and the invasion, and Lord Nelson's victories, and Benjamin West's paintings, and Dr. Willis, the king's physician, in such a manner as agreed with the other books. Thus *four* other books, without designing to do so, would be found to confirm the history in such a way as would lead you to conclude that all its statements were true.

Another reason for believing that the Bible gives a true account of the origin of all things, is, that it is the *only reasonable* account existing. Whatever other books have pretended to tell us of these matters, is gross nonsense and absurdity, such as the merest child could not for a moment believe. Then, again, the different persons who wrote the Bible were men of good sense and honesty—they were not all likely to imagine a foolish story, or to write down falsehood in order to deceive mankind. Many of them were eye and ear-witnesses, and took part in the things they recorded; for instance, Moses himself passed through the Red Sea on dry ground, and ate of the manna forty years. He could not be mistaken as to the facts. Besides, the writers of * Scripture could have gained nothing by declaring untruths. None of them were paid for it—on the contrary, many of them suffered pains and death for maintaining and asserting what they knew to be true.

In the early ages of the world, men lived many years longer than they do at present. This enabled them to hand down correct statements, much more widely and certainly than they could otherwise have done without the aid of writing, which was not then invented. You might perhaps relate some circumstance which took place seventy or eighty years ago, and say, "I know it to be true, for my grandfather, (or my great-grandfather,) who is yet living, told me that he remembers seeing it when he was a little boy." And should you live to be old, and relate the same story to your grandchildren, (or your great-grandchildren,) you would expect them to believe it on this testimony. It very rarely happens, now, that this testimony extends a hundred and fifty years; that is, for a person to be able to say, "I remember a man who witnessed an event that took place a hundred and fifty years ago;" but in the earliest ages of the world such a testimony might extend through many centuries. Methuselah might relate to Noah and his sons what he had



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When we die, what will become of us? Is there any life after death?

If only one book in the world can inform us on these most important subjects, that surely must be the Book of God.

We may farther inquire, in what manner did God impart to man this *revelation? It may be answered, that the Bible was written by a number of good men in different periods of time, as God by his Holy Spirit taught them what and how to write. The facts necessary to be recorded, which they themselves witnessed or took part in, they were assisted to recollect and relate in a proper manner, and they were preserved from writing what was not necessary; and they were immediately taught and *inspired what they ought to say and write concerning what God requires his creatures to believe and to do, and what He designs to do with them. Sometimes those who spake and wrote the word of God, were enabled to work *miracles, or signs and wonders in the presence of the people, to convince them that they indeed brought a message from God. These are recorded, that we may read them, and adore the great power of God.

QUESTIONS.

On what account is the Bible chiefly interesting to us all?

Are there any other books as old as the Bible?

The oldest books in existence, do they contradict or confirm the Bible?

Had the writers of the Bible any motive to induce them to write what was not true?

The long period of human life in the early ages, how did that tend to confirm the truth of received history?

Does the Bible give us any important instruction which we could not derive from other books?

What are the four great questions which the Bible answers?

What does this lead us to conclude?

OF THE BOOKS AND WRITERS OF SCRIPTURE.

I. THE OLD *TESTAMENT.

THE earliest of the sacred writers was Moses. He wrote the *Pentateuch, or five books, viz. *Genesis, *Exodus, *Leviticus, *Numbers, and *Deuteronomy; and in all probability the book of Job. He wrote about two thousand five hundred and fifty years after the creation, and about nine hundred years after the flood. At this

time, *idolatry had overspread the world,—men had forsaken the true God, and worshipped the sun, moon, and stars; and even vegetables, reptiles, and inferior animals.—The Israelites, or descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, alone retained the worship of the true God; and even they, from their long residence in Egypt, had imbibed many of the idolatrous notions and customs practised there. Moses therefore, in the book of Genesis, stated in simple language those great truths which tended to overturn these errors and superstitions. He begins with the creation of the world, and gives the general history of mankind, but chiefly of the family of Seth to the flood. After that event he principally confines himself to the descendants of Shem—then to the family of Abraham—and other families and people are mentioned only as they were in some way or other connected with them. The reason of this distinction is, that from that family the great *Messiah was to descend; and it was necessary to make it plainly appear, that in his descent, and in every particular, was exactly fulfilled, what God by his holy *prophets had from time to time intimated concerning the Saviour whom he had promised.—The book of Genesis closes with the death of Joseph, and comprehends a period of 2369 years.

The other four books are not altogether written in order of time; that is, we are not to suppose that what is related in Leviticus took place after what was written in Exodus, and so on. Exodus contains the history of the Israelites, from the time of their suffering oppression in Egypt, to the time of the building of the *tabernacle in the wilderness—a period of 145 years from the death of Joseph. Leviticus chiefly consists of laws given by God to Moses during that period, with some particular circumstances not mentioned in Exodus. The book of Numbers contains lists of the tribes and families who came out of Egypt, and their order and journeyings in the wilderness. It contains many historical facts not already recorded, and carries down the history to the time when Israel had reached the borders of the promised land, about thirty-nine years later than the close of Exodus. Deuteronomy is chiefly a repetition of the law and of the dealings of God with Israel, together with some additional circumstances: it closes with the death of Moses, and occupies a period of only a few months. The closing verses, which record his death, must of course have been added by some other hand—probably by Joshua his successor, or by Eleazar the high priest.



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Some relate facts which are not elsewhere recorded—as Jonah and Daniel.

The history of Daniel belongs to the period between Chronicles and Ezra.

The prophet Malachi closes the Old Testament. He wrote about three thousand six hundred years after the creation, and four hundred before the birth of Christ: so that the writings of the Old Testament were scattered through a period of rather more than a thousand years, without any very considerable interval.

QUESTIONS.

Who wrote the first five books of the Old Testament?

Are they written in *chronological order?

What is the first great event recorded in Genesis?

What family is particularly distinguished as that from which the Messiah was to descend?

What people were they whose history is given in Exodus?

Who wrote the Book of Psalms?

What were those persons called who foretold things to come?

II. THE NEW TESTAMENT.

The four *Evangelists, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, all give us the history of the life, death, and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. The history is in substance the same; but each of the writers mentions some facts which are not related by the others. The history commences four thousand and four years after the creation of the world, and occupies a period of thirty-three years—all these histories were written within a century after the birth of Christ; but the gospel of St. Matthew was the earliest, and that of St. John the latest.

The Acts of the *Apostles was written by the Evangelist Luke. It contains an account of the labours and sufferings of the apostles in preaching the gospel and planting churches. It commences with our Lord's ascension, and occupies a period of about thirty years.

The *Epistles were addressed to churches which the apostles had been instrumental in planting, or to individuals or Christians in general, to instruct and confirm their minds in the faith.

There are fourteen *Epistles written by the apostle Paul—one by James—two by Peter—three by John—one by Jude.

The book of *Revelation was written by St. John the Evangelist, during his banishment in the Isle of Patmos,

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P R E F A C E.

THIS little work was undertaken at the suggestion of several highly respected individuals, actually engaged, or benevolently interested, in the education of youth, and who have long felt the want of a familiar compendium of sacred history, adapted for school reading, and of a price generally accessible. The writer will be happy if this attempt should be found to meet their wishes, and should prove a useful auxiliary in the important work of Christian education.

It will not be supposed that this little book is intended to supersede the reading of the Holy Scriptures themselves. It simply aims at assisting the young reader in forming a correct and comprehensive view of their historical contents, and would constantly send him back with a fresh relish to the pure spring of truth.

A few questions are furnished by way of examination at the end of each chapter. Many more might be asked, all of which the attentive reader would be fully prepared to answer. It however rests with the teacher whether to adopt this or any other mode of ascertaining the progress of the pupil.

In some cases the chapters will probably be found too long for reading at one time; yet the h
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ness, He was pleased to accept the offering of humble gratitude, as an acknowledgment, that all mercies were derived from Him. Besides this, sacrifices were appointed, to teach men that sin deserves death; and that, if ever God forgives a guilty person, it must be because He accepts an innocent person instead. This, St. Paul teaches us, was the design of sacrifices, to shew that "without shedding of blood there is no *remission." Heb. ix. 22.

When Cain and Abel brought an offering unto the Lord, Cain brought of the fruits of the ground, but Abel brought a lamb of the flock; and the Lord accepted Abel's offering, but rejected that of Cain. Why? Because Abel came with humble penitence and faith in God's appointed way; but Cain came with a proud and stubborn heart, and though he would own God as the Creator and Giver of temporal gifts, would not own himself a guilty sinner, that needed pardon and atonement. We do not know how the acceptance and favour of God were expressed, but it was in some visible manner, so that both Abel and Cain were aware of it. Abel went his way with a peaceful conscience and a grateful heart; but Cain was filled with discontent and envy. Sinful as he was, God condescended to reason with him, and to tell him the way of acceptance was open to him as well as to his brother, if he came in a right spirit; but instead of repenting and humbling himself, Cain indulged, more and more, the feelings of envy and hatred against his innocent brother, and, at length, he rose up against him, and slew him! How ought we to dread the first indulgence of evil tempers! Cain did not become so very wicked at once; and when persons begin to give way to stubbornness, pride, and malice, they little think how far they may be led. He who would dread to be a murderer, should avoid the first temptation to sinful anger, and especially to envy and spitefulness.

Cain, perhaps, thought there was no witness of his crime; but he was soon accosted by the God against whom he had sinned, and who had all along seen the inmost thoughts of his malicious heart, and the guilty deed of his murderous hands. "And the Lord said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother?" This cutting question he was so hardened as to answer with a presumptuous falsehood—"I know not; am I my brother's keeper? And the Lord said, What hast thou done? The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto Me from the ground." Then God declared that for this dreadful crime which Cain had committed, the earth should

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Next we read, that, however long these *patriarchs lived, the history ends with, "*and he died.*" This should make us mindful of our own mortality, and teach us to prepare for the stroke of death, which, sooner or later, must come to all. Then we find that the only distinction which the sacred historian has thought worthy of recording is eminence in piety and goodness. We are not told who was the richest, or most learned, or most powerful, or most famous, of the patriarchs, but who "walked with God;" that is, who most eminently delighted in his worship and service, and most uniformly obeyed his commands. On one of these, Enoch, the seventh from Adam, was conferred the distinguished honour of being taken to heaven without dying—"Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for God took him;" as St. Paul explains it, "By faith Enoch was *translated, that he should not see death, and was not found, because God had translated him; for before his *translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God." (Heb. xi. 5.) Here, then, we have our fourth grand question satisfactorily answered, (p. 5;) and thus even in those early ages men were taught to look for another world beyond this—a state of happiness and reward, whither the righteous are taken at death; and, indeed, a hint was given of the possibility of the body, as well as the soul, being admitted to share that happiness. He who could so change the body of Enoch, as to make it fit to enter heaven, can raise the dead bodies that sleep in the grave, and fit them to share the blessedness of the righteous spirit.

But we must not forget that there is a reward for the wicked as well as for the righteous; as our Lord has told us, "the time cometh when all that are in the graves shall hear the voice of the Son of Man, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." (John v. 29.) And, indeed, Enoch expressly foretold this, as the apostle Jude informs us, ver. 14, 15. Gen. v.

The following lists of the families of Cain and Seth should be committed to memory:—

		A. M.
CAIN.	Adam	died 930
	SETH . born A.M.	130 — 1042
	Enos	235 — 1140
	Cainan	325 — 1235
	Mahalaleel	395 — 1290
	Jared	460 — 1422
	Enoch	622 trans. 987
	Methuselah	687 died 1656
	Lamech	874 — 1469
Enoch, after whom the first city was named.		
Irad.		
Mehujael.		
Methusael.		
Lamech, the first who married two wives.		

The three sons of Lamech :—	A. M. Noah born 1056	} All pre- served through the flood.
Jabel, famous for the management of cattle.	Sons of Noah :—	
Jubal, the inventor of musical in- struments.	Shem 1556	
Tubal-Cain, who wrought metals.	Ham, Japheth.	

QUESTIONS.

- What son of Adam is mentioned after Cain and Abel?
 What is particularly mentioned of Enoch's life?
 What is meant by walking with God?
 Did Enoch die like other men?
 Who was the oldest man?

V. THE FLOOD.

It has already been observed, that the worship and fear of God were retained in the families of Seth, so much so, that they were called by distinction *the sons of God*; but in process of time they became careless and negligent. This, as is often the case, in a great measure arose from their going into bad company. They sought the society of the ungodly descendants of Cain, and made marriages among them, only for the sake of their beauty and accomplishments, without any regard to piety and virtue. They were then easily allured to comply with their sinful practices, and thus every age became more and more corrupt. From time to time God sent his faithful servants, especially Enoch and Noah, to warn them to repent, and forsake their evil ways; but they hardened themselves in their wickedness, and despised the long-suffering goodness and tender mercy of God. At length the world was so entirely overrun with wickedness, that God resolved to drown it by a flood of water. It is said that "it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart." We are not from this to suppose that the Almighty can be moved with regret and vexation, as we are, when we have done something which we had better have left undone; but that it is a strong expression, designed to impress on our minds a deep sense of the evil of sin, which is so very offensive in the sight of God, and which caused Him to act as if He repented Him of his work, and to destroy the creatures He had made.

But in the midst of judgment God remembered mercy. Noah was distinguished as a man who feared and obeyed God in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation,

and God was pleased to distinguish him as a monument of sparing mercy, rescued from the general destruction. Noah and his wife, and his three sons and their wives, were to be saved when the whole world was drowned.

But this salvation was to be granted in such a way as should try their faith and obedience. Noah was commanded by God to build an ark or wooden vessel of very large dimensions, capable of containing his whole family, together with a few living creatures of every kind, and a sufficiency of food for their subsistence during a whole year. This must have been a very laborious and expensive undertaking, and must have often exposed Noah to the scorn and derision of the wicked men around him. And if he had not firmly believed the word of God, that the flood would come, and had he not felt it to be both his duty and his happiness to obey God, he certainly would not have set about the work, or would not have persevered in finishing it; but "by faith Noah being warned of God, of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house, by the which he became heir of the righteousness which is by faith." The long time occupied in building the ark, one hundred and twenty years, was also a proof of the long-suffering goodness of God to sinners, not being willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. Instead of cutting off those bold transgressors in a moment, as He justly might have done, God was pleased to grant them a hundred and twenty years space for repentance. All that time Noah was among them as a preacher of righteousness, warning them to flee from the wrath to come. Indeed, every stroke of his work, while he was building the ark, was a solemn warning to them of the destruction that was coming upon the wicked. But all these warnings were lost upon them, they continued hardened and careless, and it is to be feared that many who even assisted in building the ark, felt no concern whatever to seek a refuge of it, for they went on with their worldly and sensual pursuits to the very day that Noah and his family entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. Let us be taught that the judgments which God has threatened against the wicked will surely come to pass; and let us take heed that we do not slight the many kind instructions and warnings given to turn us from the ways of sin, lest we should at last prove the truth of that awful saying, "He that being often reprov'd, hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy."

When God at the beginning established the clouds above, and strengthened the fountains of the deep, he gave to the sea his decree, that the waters should not pass his commandment; He appointed the foundations of the earth. But when the same Almighty voice called for a flood to execute his righteous judgments on an ungodly world, the same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened, and the waters prevailed exceedingly upon the earth, and all the high hills that were under the whole heaven were covered, and all flesh died that moved upon the earth. But the ark, with Noah and his family, floated in safety from place to place upon the waters, until at length God in mercy caused the floods gradually to abate, and as the dry land arose above the waters, it settled on one of the mountains of Ararat. When the ark had rested there some time, Noah opened a window and sent forth a raven, which flew about here and there till the waters were dried up; a week after he sent out a dove, but the dove is a clean bird, and could not endure the noisome slime amidst which the raven sought its unclean food. The dove found no rest for the sole of her foot, so she returned to the ark. After another week Noah again sent forth the dove, and then she returned with an olive leaf in her mouth. By this Noah knew that the waters must have greatly abated. Again he sent forth the dove, and she returned no more.

By these tokens the hope of Noah and his family was cheered, and they waited patiently until God gave them permission to quit the ark, which was after somewhat more than a year's residence in it.—Gen. vi. vii. viii. 1—19.

QUESTIONS.

When mankind became numerous on the earth, what was their general character?

What special judgment did God bring upon the world?

Did mankind receive any notice of the flood before it came?

Who was saved when the world was drowned?

Was Noah a righteous man?

How were Noah and his family preserved?

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disgrace, but Shem and Japheth in a respectful manner strove to conceal it. The conduct of children to their parents is especially noticed by God, and a signal blessing is generally seen to rest upon such as are affectionate and obedient, while the undutiful child is marked as an object of the divine displeasure. Immediately after this transaction, the displeasure of God was pronounced against Ham, and the subjection of his descendants was predicted; but to Shem and Japheth were promised great enlargement and prosperity. These *predictions have been ever since fulfilling. Noah lived three hundred and fifty years after the flood, but we have no further particulars of his history.—Gen. viii. 20—22. ix.

QUESTIONS.

What was the first act of Noah on quitting the ark?

What promise did God make to Noah?

What was appointed as a seal or pledge of the promise that the world should no more be drowned?

Were all the three sons of Noah alike dutiful?

Have the predictions of Noah concerning his sons been fulfilled?

II. DIVISION OF MANKIND.

A. M. 1770.—B. C. 2234.

It appears that some general division of the earth took place under Noah and his sons, by which the different families were appointed to take possession of different countries, and so people the earth. But they were not willing to separate and occupy the portions assigned them; they therefore remained together till they became very numerous, and even then, instead of obeying the command given them, and going to different parts, those who left the original settlement, all went together towards the plain of Shinar. Having cast off the fear of God, they formed an ambitious project to build a mighty tower and a magnificent city, which should be the centre of an universal kingdom, and hold dominion over all the families of the earth. This design was probably conducted by Nimrod, a mighty hunter and warrior. But it was contrary to the design of God, who therefore signally interposed and crushed the haughty project. These men having abused the gift of speech, in concerting together a scheme of rebellion against God, He so confused their speech that they could not understand one another. This was the origin of different languages, and the origin too of different nations, for they were compelled

to form into companies of such as understood the same language, and to separate from the rest. The building of the tower was abandoned, and it long stood as a monument of the defeat and disgrace of its impious projectors. It bore the name of Babel, or confusion.

Let us never engage in any design but what is according to the will of God, and on which we can ask his blessing. If in all our ways we acknowledge Him, He will direct our paths; but if we act in disobedience and rebellion against his commands, He can defeat our best laid projects, and inflict on us the confusion and punishment we have deserved.

The dispersion of the families by the confusion of tongues, appears to have cast their abode according to the appointment of the original division. The families of Shem peopled Asia; those of Ham, Africa; and those of Japheth, Europe. The sacred history is henceforth chiefly confined to the family of Shem.—Gen. x. xi. In point of time part of the eleventh chapter comes in before the tenth, because the tenth speaks of the nations as they were called after the confusion of tongues.

QUESTIONS.

Did any division of the earth take place in the time of Noah and his sons?

Did the families go to the several countries assigned them?

What presumptuous design did the descendants of Noah form?

How was it frustrated?

What part of the world did the descendants of Shem people?

What those of Ham?

What those of Japheth?

To which family is the sacred history henceforth chiefly confined?

PERIOD III.

FROM THE CALLING OF ABRAM TO THE DEATH OF JOSEPH.

I. THE CALL OF ABRAM.

A. M. 2083.—B. C. 1921.

AFTER the flood, idolatry soon spread over the world. Some knowledge of the true God was retained in the family of Shem; but even there it was mingled with idolatrous corruptions. It pleased God to select one family from the rest of mankind, in which should be preserved purity of religion, and a belief in the promised Messiah.

For this purpose, Abram, the son of Terah, was selected. He dwelt with his family, at Ur, in Chaldea, but God commanded him to leave his country and kindred, and seek another home. Abram believed and obeyed the command of God, and went immediately to Haran, in Mesopotamia, where his father Terah died.

After this, God gave him a farther command, to leave Haran, and to go from place to place as he should receive directions. At the same time, Abram was assured that God would make of him a great nation, and that in him and in his seed all the families of the earth should be blessed. He, no doubt, was made a blessing to many, by imparting a knowledge of the true religion to those among whom he sojourned; but the promise chiefly refers to the great Messiah, who was to descend from him.

From Haran, Abram removed to Moreh, in Canaan, the land which God had promised him. He took with him Sarai his wife, and Lot, his nephew, with a great number of servants, and much cattle. From Moreh he went to Bethel, and thence from one place to another in the land of Canaan;—wherever he went, setting up an altar, and worshipping the true God. After this, a grievous famine visited the land of Canaan, and Abram and his family were driven for succour into the land of Egypt. When the famine ceased, they returned to Bethel, having greatly increased their substance. They obeyed the commands of God, and they found that his blessing was upon them,—that blessing which makes rich and adds no sorrow. Gen. xi. 27—32. xii. xiii. 1—4.

QUESTIONS.

Who was selected from among the family of Shem to keep up true religion?

What command was given him?

What promises were made to him?

What was the name of Abram's wife?

What was the name of his nephew who accompanied him?

Did they prosper after leaving their native land?

II. THE SEPARATION OF ABRAM AND LOT.—MELCHIZEDEK.—HAGAR AND ISHMAEL.

A. M. 2092.—B. C. 1912.

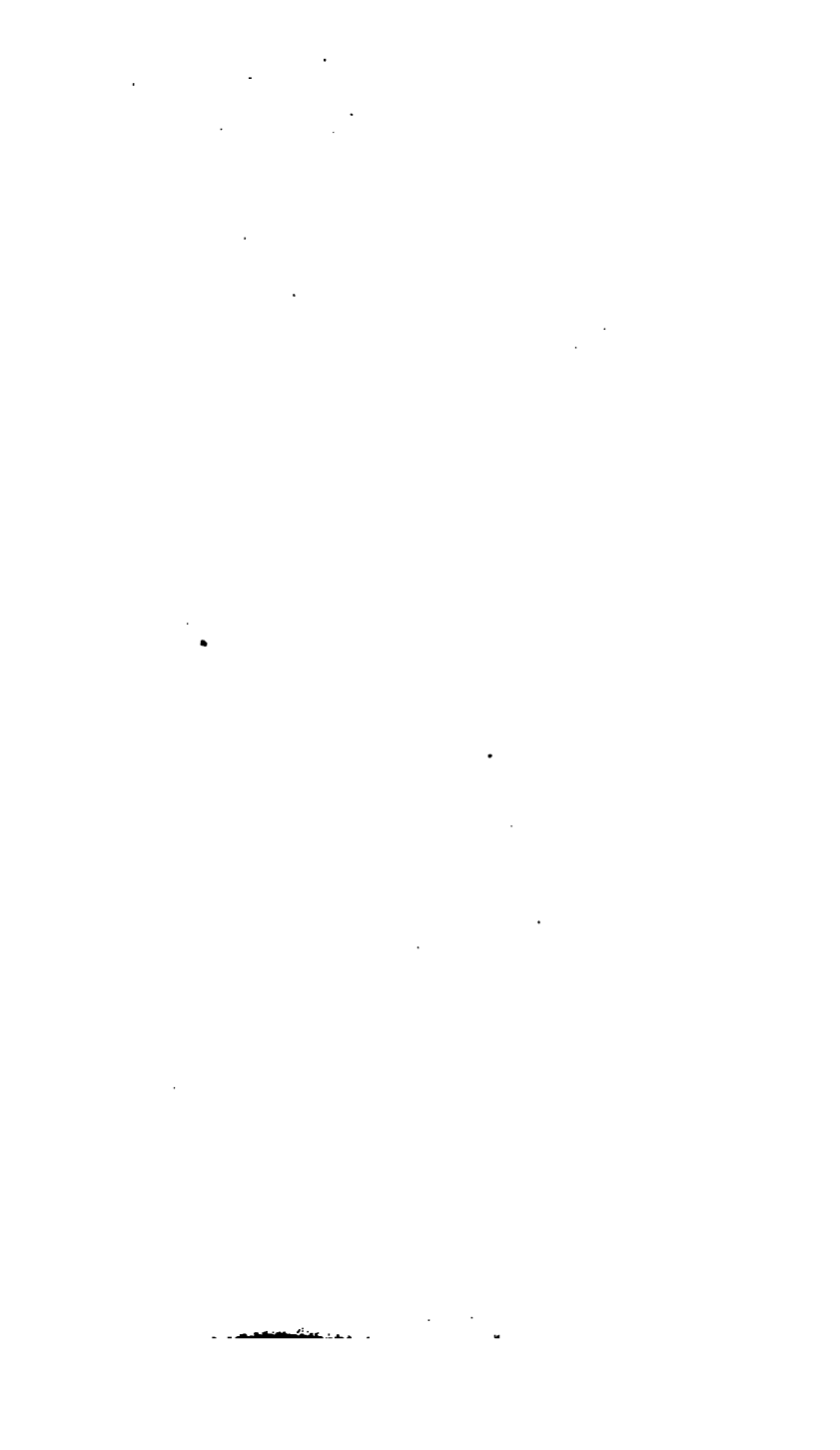
Hitherto the families of Abram and Lot had dwelt together in peace; but as their property increased, and the number of their servants was multiplied, there arose strife among the servants.



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A *S. A. 1832.*

BRIEF VIEW
OF
SACRED HISTORY

FROM THE

Creation of the World

TO THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM BY THE ROMANS.

BY ESTHER COPLEY,

AUTHOR OF COTTAGE COMFORTS, ETC.

LONDON:
WILLIAM DARTON AND SON,
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P R E F A C E.

THIS little work was undertaken at the suggestion of several highly respected individuals, actually engaged, or benevolently interested, in the education of youth, and who have long felt the want of a familiar compendium of sacred history, adapted for school reading, and of a price generally accessible. The writer will be happy if this attempt should be found to meet their wishes, and should prove a useful auxiliary in the important work of Christian education.

It will not be supposed that this little book is intended to supersede the reading of the Holy Scriptures themselves. It simply aims at assisting the young reader in forming a correct and comprehensive view of their historical contents, and would constantly send him back with a fresh relish to the pure spring of truth.

A few questions are furnished by way of examination at the end of each chapter. Many more might be asked, all of which the attentive reader would be fully prepared to answer. It however rests with the teacher whether to adopt this or any other mode of ascertaining the real progress of the pupil.

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Jacob then proceeded on his journey, and at length arrived in the neighbourhood of Haran. As he reposed near a well, the shepherds came there to water their flocks, and among them Rachel, the daughter of his uncle Laban, to whom he soon became warmly attached, and was received into her father's family. Jacob made himself very useful to his uncle in the management of his flocks, and he very justly offered to give him wages for his service. Jacob being exceedingly desirous of having Rachel for his wife, offered to serve Laban seven years for her, to which all parties consented; but at the end of the time Laban deceived Jacob, by giving him his eldest daughter Leah instead of Rachel. Laban, however, offered to give him Rachel also, provided he would serve seven years more for her. To this Jacob consented; but the practice of having more than one wife, though at that time not uncommon, was productive of much domestic uneasiness. Jacob acted a very upright and generous part towards Laban, for which he stands as a worthy pattern to servants of every description, and by the blessing of God on Jacob's diligence and good management, the substance of Laban was greatly increased; but, after serving Laban fourteen years for his daughters, and having now a numerous family of his own, Jacob wished to do something to provide for them; and Laban so well knew the value of his faithful services, that he was willing to keep him on his own terms. Jacob proposed that all the cattle and sheep of a certain colour should belong to him, to which Laban consented, and, under the especial blessing of God, Jacob became exceedingly rich and prosperous; but Laban and his sons envied his growing prosperity, and Jacob's situation became very uncomfortable. His circumstances were not overlooked by the God of his fathers, and he received an intimation that the time was come for him to return to his father's house. Accordingly he took all his family, and departed secretly, lest Laban and his sons should attempt to detain him, or to deprive him of his goods. Laban, being away from home, was not aware of the departure of Jacob and his family for three days; he, however, pursued after them, and overtook them in Mount Gilead; but God defeated any hostile intentions he might have had, by forbidding him to molest Jacob. This Divine interference struck terror into the heart of Laban, and forced him to compliance. He professed great affection and good will for Jacob and his family, and having made a covenant not to injure each other, Jacob and Laban separated in peace, after having

been twenty years connected together in Haran. Jacob's next concern was about his brother Esau, whose resentment he greatly dreaded; but the angels of God met him, and encouraged him. Jacob sent to Esau a respectful and friendly message, hoping that time might have softened his anger; but the messengers soon returned and informed Jacob, that so far from receiving this message favourably, Esau was coming against him with four hundred armed men. This news greatly dismayed Jacob; but having made the best provision he could for the safety of his family, he betook himself in earnest prayer to God, who alone could preserve them. He also sent to Esau a noble present of sheep, cattle, and camels, hoping by that means to disarm his rage, and to convince him of his affectionate and friendly disposition towards him. Jacob passed the whole night in prayer, and God was pleased to give him a signal token of success. There appeared to Jacob One in the form of a man, who wrestled with him until the breaking of the day, and at last suffered him to prevail. On this occasion God gave to Jacob the additional name of Israel, which signifies *a prince of God, or prevailing with God.*

In the morning Jacob beheld Esau and his company approaching. He advanced to meet him with every expression of respect and affection, and so signally had God interposed to soften the heart of Esau towards his brother, that the meeting, so far from being hostile, was full of the tenderest affection and most cordial reconciliation. "A soft answer turneth away wrath, and yielding pacifieth great offences;" besides this, "when a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him." After this Esau returned to his dwelling on Mount Seir, and Jacob, with his family, proceeded to Succoth, where he built him a house, and made booths for his cattle; nor did he forget, according to the pious custom of his fathers, to build also an altar to the Lord his God. Gen. xxviii.—xxxiii. xxxvi.

QUESTIONS.

Did Isaac bless Esau at all?

What people descended from Esau?

Where did Jacob go when he left his father's house?

What took place the first night of his journey?

How long did Jacob stay with his uncle Laban?

When Jacob returned, how did he meet his brother Esau?

What new name was given to Jacob?

where it may be necessary to divide the chapter into two or three portions, taking each day the questions on the portion read, it will be desirable also, at the close, to go over the questions on the whole together.

In order to avoid frequent parenthetical explanations, a glossary is furnished at the end, explaining words and phrases peculiar to Scripture, or used there in a sense different from that in common acceptance. The words thus explained are distinguished by an asterisk.

It has been suggested, that though this book has been principally designed for the use of schools, it will form a suitable companion to the Bible in the cottage library. Usefulness is the highest aim and ambition of the writer. There are two classes—the young, and the labouring—on whose behalf she feels peculiarly interested, and to them her humble endeavours are most affectionately dedicated.

ST. ALDATE'S, OXFORD,
Sept. 12, 1831.

INTRODUCTION.

THE *Bible is a book which is highly interesting to us all, chiefly on two accounts,—because it informs us of many important facts in the history of the world, and of mankind, which we could not otherwise have known; and because it is a book given us by the mercy of God, on purpose to teach us what is our duty in this life, and by what means we may obtain everlasting happiness in the life to come. If any one inquires how we know that the history of the Bible is a true record of facts, we should answer—First, because there is no other book in the world so old as the Bible—of course, there is nothing of the same date to contradict what the Bible says. And the next oldest books which are in existence make mention of the same facts as are related in the Bible, or, at least, allude to them, and so serve to confirm it.

Suppose there were only one book in the world that contained the history of England during the reign of George III. ; having read it, you might say, “How do I know that this is truth?—this king was dead, and this book was written before I was born.” If you wished to be certain of the truth, you would first inquire if there was any other book on the same subject, and of the same date, that could prove the statements of the former to be false ; on being told No—there is no such book—you would inquire for books on other subjects, and as near the time as you could obtain, that might tend to confirm or to contradict it. And you might read in the life of Napoleon Buonaparte, Emperor of France, that he attempted to invade England *about the year 1804, in the reign of King George the Third*. You might read the life of a famous painter named West, and that he painted many beautiful pictures *at the command of King George the Third*, which pictures are still to be seen at such and such places. You might read of Admiral Lord Nelson, who gained many great victories *in the reign of George the*

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VIII. JOSEPH IN PROSPERITY.

A. M. 2297.—B. C. 1707.

Joseph was now advanced to the highest post of honour and authority under Pharaoh the king; but he was still humble, diligent, and faithful. Prosperity is as great a trial of character as adversity, and the fear of God ruling in the heart is the only principle by which we can maintain, under both, a steady, even mind, and an upright, benevolent, and exemplary conversation—by which we can be happy in ourselves, and useful to those around us—Joseph shone alike in every situation. The seven years of plenty immediately commenced, and were wisely employed in collecting stores of food. During this period Joseph was married to Asenath, a noble lady of that country, and two sons were born to him, Manasseh and Ephraim.

It may seem strange, when Joseph regained his liberty and was raised to prosperity in Egypt, that he did not immediately inform his aged father of his situation. We do not know by what particular circumstances he was withheld from doing this; but it afterwards plainly appears, that all was overruled by God for the bringing about his own wise and gracious purposes.

When the famine commenced, the storehouses were opened, and the Egyptians allowed to purchase a sufficient supply; and even the inhabitants of distant countries came to buy corn in Egypt, for the effects of the famine were widely extended, and the stores of Egypt were most abundant. The famine was very severe in the land of Canaan, where Jacob and his sons dwelt, and hearing of the supply in Egypt, it was resolved that the ten brethren should go down thither to buy food, leaving Benjamin with his aged father.

As every one who came to buy food made application to Joseph, the sons of Jacob were introduced into his presence. Though they had been separated more than twenty years, Joseph immediately recollected them, but remained unknown to them: on approaching him, they bowed themselves before him with their faces to the earth, as his dream many years before had intimated. In order to try their present dispositions, and to promote in them repentance for their past misconduct, Joseph determined to remain concealed from their knowledge, and to deal with them in such a way as would be likely to touch their consciences, and lead them to acknowledge, that what they now suffered was the just reward of their own former deeds. He first questioned

them very strictly as to their family and circumstances, and affected to consider them as spies, sent by some hostile nation, to spy out the nakedness (or defenceless state) of some part of the land, in order to attack it. They assured him that they were all brethren—that their aged father was yet living—that they had two other brethren, one of whom was dead, and the other remained with his father in the land of Canaan. Questioning the truth of this story, he commanded them to be put in prison, where they had leisure for reflection, and where their consciences were fully awakened to a sense of their past guilt. When imprisoned on a charge of which they were innocent, they remembered the injury they had inflicted on their innocent brother, and they said one to another, "We are verily guilty concerning our brother, because we saw the anguish of his soul when he besought us, and we would not hear, therefore is this distress come upon us." Let not any venture on doing wrong, in the hope that they can conceal it from others, and pacify and lull to sleep their own consciences. There is nothing hid but shall be made known, and though conscience may long be benumbed and stifled, sooner or later it will awake and pierce the guilty soul with many sorrows. After three days confinement, Joseph released all his brethren except Simeon, and permitted them to return with the food, on condition that when they came for a fresh supply they should bring with them their youngest brother Benjamin—Simeon was detained as a pledge that the rest would return. Joseph also ordered that the money should be returned into every man's sack.

On their return home they related all these singular circumstances to their father. He was exceedingly agitated by the report, and augured from it nothing but evil. When the supply was nearly exhausted, the sons of Jacob prepared to go down again into Egypt, and with great difficulty prevailed on their father to permit Benjamin to accompany them. Jacob's heart was sorely rent at parting with the son of his old age, but necessity pressed upon him, and, like a pious man, he submitted himself to the will of God concerning his family, and earnestly implored for them the Divine protection and interposition—"And God Almighty give you mercy with the man."

On their arrival at Joseph's house, the sons of Jacob related to the steward the circumstance of their money being restored, and professed their innocence and uprightness. The steward encouraged them to hope that all was

right, and brought out Simeon to them. When Joseph came in he received them kindly, and caused them to dine in his house, but at a separate table, on account of the distinction kept up between the Egyptians and the Hebrews. He supplied them from his own table, and sent to Benjamin five times as much as the rest, no doubt with an intention to excite their attention and curiosity by his extraordinary conduct. But as this measure failed to excite their inquiry, Joseph resorted to another expedient. He ordered his steward to return the money in each man's sack as before, and also to put his own silver cup into Benjamin's sack, and then, as soon as they had departed from the city, he caused them to be pursued after, and charged with theft. When overtaken they solemnly declared their innocence, invited the pursuers to search their sacks, and offered, that if the cup should be found with either of them, he should be immediately put to death. On the cup being found in Benjamin's sack, in the greatest distress they all hastened back to the city, and Judah, in the name of the rest, addressed the governor. He strongly asserted their innocence in this particular, but acknowledged that God had found out their former iniquity. He then most affectingly pleaded the distress of their aged parent on behalf of Benjamin, and besought that they might all be accepted as Joseph's servants, or himself alone remain as a bondsman, so that Benjamin might be permitted to return.

Overcome by this touching appeal, and convinced of their sincere penitence, and that they harboured no improper feelings towards their father, or towards Benjamin on account of the partiality with which he was regarded, Joseph could no longer refrain, but discovered himself to his brethren, assuring them of his hearty forgiveness, and leading them to adore the hand of God which overruled their wickedness, as the means of bringing him down to Egypt to save the lives of many in the time of famine. He then invited them to come with their father and all their families, and settle in the land of Egypt for the remaining years of the famine, and dismissed them with every thing needful for the comfort of their father by the way, and with a strict injunction to agree among themselves. When they arrived at home, and brought to their father the tidings of Joseph's life and exaltation, he could scarcely believe for joy; but when he saw the carriages and other accommodations which Joseph had provided for his journey, he exclaimed, "It is enough—Joseph my son is yet alive—I will go down and see him

before I die." He accordingly set out for Egypt, accompanied by all his children and descendants.

On their way they halted at Beersheba, and offered sacrifices to the God of Abraham and Isaac; and there, in the vision of the night, God encouraged him to prosecute his journey, assuring him that he should certainly be brought up again to Canaan (that is, in his burial; thus, as it were, maintaining the right of his descendants to the land, and taking possession of it). Jacob then proceeded, and had a happy and affecting meeting with his long-lost son, by whom also he was introduced to Pharaoh, and received permission to settle in the best part of the land of Egypt. Gen. xli. 37—xlvii.

QUESTIONS.

What did Joseph foretel to Pharaoh king of Egypt?

What advice did Joseph give to Pharaoh?

Who was appointed to manage the produce of the plentiful years?

Who came to buy corn of Joseph?

Did he know his brethren?

Why did he not make himself known to them at once?

When Joseph insisted on seeing Benjamin, was Jacob willing to let him go?

What was brought to the remembrance of Joseph's brethren by his strange conduct towards them?

When Joseph made himself known to his brethren, what message did he send to his father?

Did Jacob come into Egypt?

Who accompanied him?

Did he ever go back to Canaan?

IX. DEATH OF JACOB AND JOSEPH.

A. M. 2315.—B. C. 1689.

After the time of famine had passed by, the families of Israel continued to dwell in Egypt, and multiplied exceedingly. When Jacob found the infirmities of age increasing upon him, he called for Joseph his son, and obtained of him a solemn promise that he would bury him in the burying-place of his fathers, in the land of Canaan. Some time after this Jacob fell sick, Joseph then again visited him, bringing with him his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim. The dying patriarch roused himself to bestow on his beloved son his parting blessing. He *adopted as his own the two sons of Joseph, and pronounced on them a prophetic *benediction, throughout the whole giving a marked preference to Ephraim, the younger. He did this under the influence of *inspiration; and the history of the two families fully corresponded with the patriarch's declaration. Ephraim and Manasseh

were regarded as heads of distinct tribes of Israel. Jacob concluded with an assurance that God would certainly be with his sons, and bring them up to possess the land of Canaan; and having pronounced on each a *prophetical *benediction, and repeated his injunction that they should bury him in the cave of Machpelah, he departed in the full assurance of faith, at the age of one hundred and forty-seven. His dying *predictions exactly answer to the circumstances of the several tribes, after their settlement in the land of Canaan, until the coming of the Messiah. Joseph discovered all the feelings of a dutiful and affectionate son on the death of his venerated parent, and obtained leave of Pharaoh to go down into Canaan and fulfil his dying request. Accordingly, Joseph and his brethren, attended by many of the Egyptians, carried up the remains of Israel their father, and buried them in the cave of Machpelah.

The brethren of Joseph now indulged an apprehension that Joseph might still harbour resentment against them, and that now their father was no longer there to intercede for them, they might at last receive at his hands the reward of their former cruelty; but Joseph assured them of his entire forgiveness, affection, and good offices. He who has tasted the love of God, knows how to forgive even as he is forgiven; resentment can never lodge in his breast; but the conscience once wounded with guilt, is apt to be timorous and mistrustful; he who can scarcely forgive himself, knows not how to believe that others can freely and entirely forgive him. Joseph continued to an advanced age to hold his high office in the court of Egypt, and was still the protector and benefactor of the people of Israel. Before his death he called around him his brethren, (that is, his relations,) and expressed to them his full confidence that God would certainly visit them, and bring them again to Canaan, the land of their fathers. As an expression of his own lively faith in the promises of God, and for the confirmation of theirs, he directed that his body should not be buried in Egypt, but, being properly secured, should be carried up with the people into the land of Canaan, when God should call them up thither, which was accordingly done.

Thus closes the book of Genesis. After the death of Joseph another Pharaoh king of Egypt oppressed the Israelites, and made them work like slaves, and in every respect treated them with the greatest cruelty. This lasted for above sixty years, and then God appeared to deliver them by the hand of Moses.

QUESTIONS.

When Jacob grew old and feeble, what promise did he obtain from Joseph?

In Jacob's last sickness who came with Joseph to visit him?

To which of the sons of Joseph did Jacob give the preference?

Did the prophetic blessings which Jacob spoke refer to his sons themselves, or chiefly to their families?

Were they made good in the after history of the tribes?

Where was Jacob buried?

Why did he wish to be buried there?

Was Joseph kind to his brethren after their father's death?

Did Joseph die in Egypt?

Was he buried there?

Did the families of Israel continue to dwell in Egypt?

Were they still kindly treated?

THE HISTORY OF JOB.

We do not know the exact period of Job's history, but it is certainly very ancient. Some suppose that Job lived during the bondage of the Israelites in Egypt; others think that he lived before Abraham. Job dwelt in the land of Uz; he was one of the greatest men of the land, probably a prince or noble. His possessions were very vast, chiefly consisting in large numbers of sheep, cattle, asses, and camels. He had also seven sons and three daughters, and a very numerous household. But he was not so highly distinguished by outward prosperity, as by eminent piety, integrity, and benevolence. Both in his personal conduct, and in his public capacity, as a ruler and magistrate, he was influenced by the fear of God, and conscientiously avoided and opposed evil. He also employed his wealth in relieving the miseries and promoting the comfort of others. He protected the oppressed, consoled the widow, relieved the fatherless, sheltered the stranger; and the blessing of them that were ready to perish often came upon him. What a truly amiable and excellent character was that of Job! and what a blessing when wealth is intrusted to one who thus employs it in doing good to those around him!

But piety and benevolence are no security against sudden reverses in outward things. Nor is worldly prosperity in itself a proof of the favour of God; nor outward afflictions any mark of his displeasure. The wicked sometimes prosper in the world, and the righteous are often afflicted. There are two things of far greater consequence than outward circumstances, viz., the disposition manifested under them, and the final issue to which they lead. These remarks will be illustrated in the history of Job.

We sometimes read in Scripture of evil spirits being permitted to tempt men to sin; and sometimes of their being very spiteful and malicious against those whom they cannot seduce, and contriving means to vex and harass them. This should put us on our guard against all temptations to evil, and lead us to pray for strength and grace to resist them. It should also encourage us, under trials and afflictions, to be assured that neither wicked men nor devils can do us injury, but as God permits them; and that He will support his people under all the trials He suffers them to be exercised with, and overrule them all to bring forth greater good.

Satan had, no doubt, tried to tempt Job from his piety and integrity; but the good man having the fear of God ruling in his heart, was enabled to stand firm and steadfast. When Satan could not find a blemish in Job's conduct, he basely insinuated that he was not sincere at heart, and that he was religious, not from real inward love and choice, but for the sake of his wealth and outward prosperity. It pleased the Almighty to permit a very severe exercise of the trial of Job's integrity and piety. He was all at once, by the instrumentality of Satan and wicked men, plunged into a state of calamity and destitution, as signal as his former prosperity. His oxen, asses, and camels, were carried away by robbers; his sheep destroyed by lightning; his children crushed to death in the ruins of a house blown down by a whirlwind. When Job received the tidings of these overwhelming calamities, he uttered not a murmuring word, but bowed as became a saint of the Lord, and said, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." But Job's cup of misery was not yet full. He was seized with a singular and dreadful distemper, so that his whole body was covered with painful and loathsome sores; and his wife, who ought to have been his chief earthly comforter, aggravated his distress by her reproaches, and by urging him to murmur against the God who thus afflicted him, and either to provoke God to destroy him, or to put an end to his own misery. Yet, even under these accumulated trials, Job was enabled to retain his integrity and pious resignation. He said, "What, shall we receive good at the hand of the Lord, and shall we not also receive evil?" In all this did not Job sin with his lips.

After this, Job was visited by three of his friends, Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar. They came with the professed intention of comforting him; but when they witnessed the

singular and complicated afflictions that were heaped upon him, they unjustly concluded, that Job had been a great sinner and a hypocrite, and that these afflictions were signal marks of the displeasure of God against him. Under this impression, they uttered many bitter and cruel reproaches against him, and fiercely debated the matter with him. Their sentiments were just and correct on general principles, but utterly unjust in their application to Job's particular case.

Job, in reply, steadfastly asserted his own innocence and integrity, and declared, that he could give no special and satisfactory reason why he should be thus singularly afflicted. Job sometimes gave way to very rash expressions in the bitterness of his soul, and sometimes seems to have forgotten that, however irreproachable in the sight of men, he was still guilty before God; and that God was righteous and just in whatever calamities He inflicted. Still, however, he maintained, on the whole, a pious trust and confidence in God, and a firm expectation of a future state.

The more Job and his friends argued, the farther they appeared from coming to any agreement. At length, a fourth visitant took up the debate; Elihu, who though a young man, and singularly modest, took a more correct view of the subject than either of the others. His argument was, that for wise and good purposes, God often afflicts men; and that in every case, however severe our sufferings, our duty is submission. Elihu concluded his address with a sublime description of the omnipotence of the Creator. After this, Jehovah himself appeared in awful majesty, addressing Job out of the whirlwind, magnificently illustrating his own infinite power, and man's utter ignorance of his works and ways.

Job then humbled himself in lowly submission and self-abhorrence before God. His submission was accepted; his integrity attested, and he was restored to his former, and yet more abundant prosperity. His friends were severely reproved for their rashness and cruelty; but at the intercession of Job, they were forgiven. Job lived to a good old age, and saw around him a numerous and prosperous family. His history is summed up, and his example recommended, by the apostle James: "Take, my brethren, the prophets who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction and of patience. Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy." James v. 10, 11.

QUESTIONS.

What periods are mentioned as the probable dates of Job's history?

What were Job's outward circumstances?

What was his moral character?

What evil spirit is mentioned as endeavouring to procure his calamities?

To what circumstances was Job reduced in point of worldly possessions?

What calamity befell his family?

Was he visited with bodily disease?

How did his wife conduct herself towards him?

Did Job murmur against God?

When Job's friends came to visit him in his affliction, what opinion did they entertain of him?

Were they correct in thinking him a hypocrite?

What was the design of God in thus afflicting Job?

Which of Job's friends spoke most properly?

How was Job brought to humility and submission?

Was Job ever restored to prosperity?

Was the conduct of Job's friends approved by God?

PERIOD IV.

FROM THE BIRTH TO THE DEATH OF MOSES.

I. THE EARLY LIFE OF MOSES.

A. M. 2433,—B. C. 1571.

PHARAOH, the cruel king of Egypt and oppressor of the children of Israel, tried various means of afflicting that people, in the hope that their spirits might be broken, and they be discouraged from any enterprise, and especially from forming themselves into families; but all his attempts were vain, for the blessing of God was with this persecuted people, and the more they were oppressed, the more they multiplied. Finding his former projects fail, the wicked king commanded that all the male infants of the Hebrews should be destroyed.

At this time Amram and Jochebed, of the tribe of Levi, had a son born of remarkable beauty and promise. Influenced by parental affection, they naturally desired to preserve his life; they had also probably received some extraordinary intimation that he should be spared and raised up for a blessing to Israel. We are not sure that they had received such an intimation, but it is said that what they did for his preservation was done "by faith," (Heb. xi. 23,) and this leads us to

suppose that God had given them some command or promise, on which their faith acted. With great difficulty they hid the infant three months in their own house; and when they found that concealment was no longer possible, Jochebed made a little cradle or ark of bulrushes, of such a shape as would float, and coated it within and without with slime or pitch to resist the water. She then placed her infant in the ark, and concealed it among the flags of the Nile, the great river of Egypt, and stationed her daughter Miriam at some little distance to watch what became of the babe. It pleased Providence to direct to the spot, the daughter of Pharaoh the king. On seeing the helpless babe her compassion was excited, and she determined to preserve its life. Miriam came up, and offered to procure for it a Hebrew nurse; on being permitted to do so, she went and fetched the mother herself, to whose care the child was committed to be brought up as the son of Pharaoh's daughter. He received from her the name of Moses, which signifies "drawn out of the water." As Moses grew up, the princess had him instructed in all the knowledge and wisdom of the Egyptians; but his good parents had, earlier still, instructed him in the principles of the true religion, and had taught him that the Israelites, however persecuted, were the people of God. These instructions secretly wrought in his mind, and his heart being touched with compassion for the sufferings of his Hebrew brethren, he often visited them, and obtained information of their circumstances.

At length, under the influence of a divine principle of faith, he determined rather to choose his portion among the afflicted Israelites than among the oppressive Egyptians. He also began to entertain an idea that God would, by his means, deliver Israel. Thus impressed, he quitted the court of Egypt, and visited his brethren. Seeing an Egyptian oppress an Israelite, he slew the Egyptian, and rescued his brother; but afterwards seeing two Israelites strive together, he endeavoured to reconcile them, saying, "Ye are brethren." They, however, reproached him for the slaughter of the Egyptian, and Pharaoh hearing of it, sought to slay Moses; but he fled into the land of Midian. The principles by which Moses was actuated are beautifully and instructively described by the apostle Paul (Heb. xi. 24—27.) "By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than

the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward. By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing Him who is invisible." The only way to true greatness of character is to act always with the fear of God, and the prospect of eternity before our eyes. If we do thus, we shall always prefer a good conscience to the greatest worldly gains and honours, and we shall find that in so doing we have made a good choice.

In Midian, Moses spent the second forty years of his life, and employed his time in keeping sheep. There he married the daughter of Reuel, Raguel, or Jethro, a priest or prince of that country, and had two sons. This long retirement was as beneficial in preparing Moses for his future important service, as his previous education in Egypt had been. *Exod. i. ii.*

QUESTIONS.

- Who was the king of Egypt when Moses was born?
- How did he treat the Israelites?
- Why did the parents of Moses conceal his birth?
- When they could no longer conceal him at home, what did they do?
- Who was left to watch Moses?
- Who found him?
- Who was employed to nurse Moses?
- What was he taught by his parents?
- When Moses was grown up what choice did he make?
- Whither did he flee from the wrath of Pharaoh?
- How long did he dwell in Midian?
- What was his employment there?

II. MOSES SENT TO PHARAOH.

A. M. 2513.—B. C. 1491.

At length the time drew nigh when God would fulfil his promises to Abraham and Isaac, in delivering their descendants from Egyptian bondage, and bringing them into the land of Canaan. Moses was the appointed instrument for effecting this mighty work, and he was called to it in a very extraordinary manner. As he kept sheep in Horeb, the Lord appeared to him in a burning bush or copse, which, though in a flame of fire, was not consumed. Moses was astonished at the sight, and turned aside to gaze and wonder. A voice from the bush enjoined on him sacred reverence, and then informed him that he was to go to Pharaoh, and to bring Israel out of Egypt. Moses shrunk from the task, considering his own weakness, and the difficulty of the enterprise; but the Lord

engaged to be with him, and to give him success, and as a token thereof, promised Moses that having brought the people out of Egypt, they should worship God in that mount. We may always rest assured that God is able to fulfil all his promises, and that if we seek Him in sincerity, He will enable us to perform all his commands. However trying our duties, and however feeble our powers, if God be with us we need not fear; and He is nigh to all that call upon Him in truth.

Moses humbly asked by what name he should proclaim the message to Israel, and God declared Himself by that great and awful name, "I AM, THAT I AM:" "Say to the people of Israel, I AM hath sent thee." This name signifies "*He that exists*," or that has life in Himself. Besides this, God was pleased to declare Himself as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; the God who was in * covenant with them, and who in fulfilment of that * covenant was now about to deliver their descendants.

Moses' first errand was to the people, directing them to apply to Pharaoh for leave to go a three days' journey into the wilderness to sacrifice unto their God. At first, Moses thought the people would not believe that God had sent him, but he was empowered to work several * miracles to convince them, such as his rod becoming a serpent, and again becoming a rod in his hand; also, his hand in a moment becoming *leprous, and then again in a moment becoming sound.

As Moses complained that he was not a good speaker, his brother Aaron was permitted to go with him, and speak both to the people and to Pharaoh. Moses then took leave of his father-in-law Jethro, and set off to visit his brethren in Egypt. By the way he met Aaron, who came forth to meet him, and they went together to the people, who having heard the message of Moses, and seen the * miracles he wrought, believed that God had sent him, and expressed their grateful *adoration of God, who had been pleased to look upon their affliction.

Moses and Aaron then went into the presence of Pharaoh, and asked permission for the people to go into the wilderness and worship their God. It should be observed, that the first Pharaoh who oppressed the Israelites about the time of Moses' birth, was now dead; but this Pharaoh his successor resembled, and even went beyond him, in cruelty and hardness of heart. So far from complying with the request of the people, Pharaoh ordered that their burdens should be increased. He demanded from them an equal quantity of bricks, which they were employed in making, but withheld

from them the necessary materials. On this the people were disheartened, and reproached Moses and Aaron as having brought upon them this new trouble, and Moses earnestly pleaded the case with the Lord. On this occasion the Lord renewed his promise by his name JEHOVAH, a God faithful to his word; which he was now about to fulfil by delivering his people from their bondage. But the people were so discouraged, that they would not hearken to Moses. And even Moses himself shrunk from appearing again before Pharaoh, until encouraged by fresh assurances of the Divine presence and protection. At this time it was directed that Aaron should carry the rod or wand of Moses, and should perform the miracles in the sight of Pharaoh, to convince him that the God of Israel who had sent them, was a God of almighty power. On Aaron's rod becoming a serpent, the *magicians of Pharaoh attempted, and were permitted, to imitate this miracle; their rods also became serpents; but to humble them in the moment of triumph, Aaron's rod swallowed up theirs, thus maintaining a superiority which they could not imitate; but Pharaoh's heart was still hardened. When it is said that "the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart," we are not to suppose that God was the author or promoter of his wickedness. "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God, for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth He any man; but every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed;" (James i. 13, 14.) and when wicked men resist the calls of God, and the rebukes of conscience, they are sometimes in just judgment left to their own hardness and impenitence of heart. This was the case with Pharaoh. *Exod iii.—vii. 13.*

QUESTIONS.

When Moses was eighty years old, to what great work was he called? In what manner was he called to his work?

What encouraged Moses to engage in so arduous an enterprise?

Under what name did God declare himself to Moses?

What is the meaning of that name?

What *miracles was Moses permitted to work, to prove that God had sent him?

Why was Aaron permitted to accompany Moses?

Did the people of Israel believe that Moses was sent from God to deliver them?

Was the Pharaoh to whom Moses was sent, the same who first oppressed the Israelites?

How did Pharaoh receive the message of Moses?

When the *magicians imitated the miracles, how did the superiority of Moses and Aaron appear?

III. THE PLAGUES OF EGYPT.

- A. M. 2513.—B. C. 1491.

When first Moses was sent to Pharaoh he was commanded to say that Jehovah regarded Israel as his son, his first-born, and that if Pharaoh refused to let Israel go to serve his Father and his God, the first-born of Pharaoh should be smitten; but this awful judgment, though first threatened, was last inflicted, and lighter strokes were tried; for God is long-suffering and merciful, not willing that sinners should perish, but rather that they should come to repentance. The first miraculous judgment which God sent upon Egypt by the hand of Moses and Aaron, was the turning all the WATERS into BLOOD, so that the fish died and became putrid, and the people were greatly distressed for want of water to drink. The Egyptians worshipped the rivers, particularly this great river, the Nile—and blood was their abhorrence. This miracle might well make them ashamed of their idolatry, and convince them that the God of Israel was the only living and true God. This plague lasted seven days, but produced no good effect on Pharaoh's wicked heart.

The second plague filled the rivers, lakes, and ponds, with FROGS, so numerous, that they overspread the land, and filled the palace and the bed-chamber of the king, as well as every meaner abode. Frogs, also, were regarded sacred by the Egyptians, and thus, by making this creature a mortifying plague to them, additional contempt was poured on their idolatry. Pharaoh now seemed somewhat humbled, and begged Moses and Aaron to pray for the removal of this plague, promising to let the people go as they had requested—but when they did so, and the plague was removed, Pharaoh again hardened his heart.

The next plague was that of LICE. How humbling to the pride of man, that so mean and filthy a creature should be sent in such vast numbers, as to render their very lives a burden! This also reproved their *superstition—as the Egyptians were needlessly scrupulous about external purity in their idolatrous worship, while, at the same time, they practised the most filthy and abominable rites. The magicians had been permitted to imitate the former *miracles, but they could not imitate this, and they were constrained to own the finger of God in it.

The fourth plague was that of FLIES. These, also, they worshipped; indeed their chief god was Baalzebub, or *the lord of flies*. While the Egyptians were thus tormented, the

Israelites were totally free from the plague, no flies came into their dwellings. Pharaoh now offered to the people to sacrifice to their God in the land of Egypt, but this was rejected. He then entreated the removal of the plague, and promised to let the people go; but when the plague was removed, he again dealt deceitfully, and hardened his heart.

The fifth plague was a grievous MURRAIN, or disease among their cattle. These creatures they worshipped while living. How forlorn must they feel themselves when they saw their gods fall dead at their feet! and how must the power of Jehovah appear in slaying the cattle of the Egyptians, which they worshipped, and at the same time preserving the cattle of the Israelites, by whom they were regarded in their proper light as useful brutes! Under this judgment, however, the heart of Pharaoh was still hardened.

The sixth plague was sore BOILS, breaking out over man and beast. It was produced by sprinkling the ashes of the furnace towards heaven. In these furnaces the Egyptians used to offer human sacrifices, and scatter the ashes, in hope of obtaining a blessing from the gods of Egypt; but the true God made it the instrument of their curse and torment, yet Pharaoh's heart was still hardened.

Before the seventh plague was inflicted, Moses and Aaron appealed to Pharaoh, and assured him that the God of Israel would glorify himself, by making him a signal monument of his power and vengeance. The plague threatened, and on the following day inflicted, was very dreadful THUNDER and HAIL. This was quite unusual in that climate, and therefore, the more terrific. It destroyed the fields, vines, and sycamore trees of the Egyptians—but the land of Goshen, where Israel dwelt, was again preserved in this visitation. Pharaoh again professed repentance, and begged Moses and Aaron to pray for him. They did so, and the plague was removed, but Pharaoh still acted deceitfully.

The eighth plague was that of LOCUSTS, which overspread the whole land, and consumed what remained from the storm. Pharaoh, in haste, called for Moses and Aaron, and again implored the clemency he had so often abused. Mercy was extended, but he hardened his heart as before.

The ninth plague was a total DARKNESS, which lasted three days, but all this time the children of Israel had light in their dwellings. Pharaoh then offered the people to go, but to leave their cattle behind them. This they refused to do, as the cattle were wanted both for food and sacrifice.

were totally free from the plague, no flies came to their dwellings. Pharaoh now offered to the people to go to their God in the land of Egypt, but this was refused. He then entreated the removal of the plague, and promised to let the people go; but when the plague ceased, he again dealt deceitfully, and hardened his heart.

The third plague was a grievous MURRAIN, or disease among the cattle. These creatures they worshipped while living. How must they feel themselves when they saw their cattle dead at their feet! and how must the power of God appear in slaying the cattle of the Egyptians, which was worshipped, and at the same time preserving the cattle of the Israelites, by whom they were regarded in their proper estimation as useful brutes! Under this judgment, however, the Pharaoh was still hardened.

The fourth plague was sore BOILS, breaking out over man and beast. It was produced by sprinkling the ashes of the furnace towards heaven. In these furnaces the Egyptians offered human sacrifices, and scatter the ashes, in obtaining a blessing from the gods of Egypt; but God made it the instrument of their curse and yet Pharaoh's heart was still hardened.

When the seventh plague was inflicted, Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh, and assured him that the God of Israel would glorify himself, by making him a signal monument of his power and vengeance. The plague threatened, the following day inflicted, was very dreadful THUNDER and LIGHTNING. This was quite unusual in that climate, and the more terrific. It destroyed the fields, vines, and more trees of the Egyptians—but the land of Goshen, where Israel dwelt, was again preserved in this visitation. Pharaoh again professed repentance, and begged Moses and Aaron to pray for him. They did so, and the plague was removed, but Pharaoh still acted deceitfully.

The eighth plague was that of LOCUSTS, which overspread the land, and consumed what remained from the seventh plague. Pharaoh, in haste, called for Moses and Aaron, and implored the clemency he had so often abused. Mercy was shown, but he hardened his heart as before.

The ninth plague was a total DARKNESS, which lasted three days. At this time the children of Israel had light in their dwellings. Pharaoh then offered to the people to go, but when the darkness was removed, he refused to let them go, and offered to sacrifice to the gods of Egypt.

Pharaoh then, in a rage, drove Moses and Aaron from his presence, and declared he would see their face no more. They departed, having warned Pharaoh of the last approaching plague, the DEATH OF THE FIRST-BORN.

The people of Israel were then directed to borrow, or ask of their neighbours, jewels of gold and silver—and the Lord inclined their hearts to lend them in great abundance—perhaps, to the value of the wages they had unjustly withheld from the oppressed Israelites, (see James v. 4.) Before the last plague was inflicted, Israel was instructed to celebrate a significant rite, which was at once the means and the memorial of their deliverance. In every family, or two small families united, a lamb was set apart, slain, roasted, and eaten with great solemnity. The blood of the victim was sprinkled on the lintel and door posts of every dwelling, and all the inhabitants were directed to remain close within doors till morning. They were also informed that the like solemnity was to be observed every year among them, and especial care was taken to instruct the children of each succeeding generation in its meaning.

At midnight the tenth and most dreadful plague was inflicted on the Egyptians. The angel of the Lord passed through the land, and slew all the first-born both of man and beast, so that in all Egypt there was not a house, including the palace of Pharaoh, in which there was not one dead; but the angel passed over the houses which were distinguished by the sprinkled blood, and did not hurt any of the families of Israel. Hence the observance thus instituted, was called the Feast of the Passover. This is a type of the blood of Jesus Christ shed for our sins, by faith in which alone, we can be saved from the wrath of God, and the destruction that awaits the wicked. Thus we read in the New Testament, "Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us," 1 Cor. v. 7. "Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." 1 Peter i. 18, 19.

This last dreadful visitation procured the release of Israel, for Pharaoh rose up in haste, called for Moses and Aaron, and gave orders for the immediate departure of the people, with all their property. The Egyptians in general were very urgent with them to depart, and readily furnished them with whatever they desired of raiment and other valuable things. So sudden was their departure, that they took their dough in its unleavened state, bound up in their leathern kneading-troughs on their shoulders. They went forth to the number

of 600,000 men fit for war, i. e. of twenty years old and upwards, besides women, children, and aged persons. Their departure took place on the self-same day that they had accomplished the 430 years predicted by God himself to Abraham their forefather; so faithful is God to his promises. *Exod. vii. 14. to xii.* Also, read *Psalm cv.*

QUESTIONS.

When Pharaoh refused to let Israel go, what plagues were inflicted on Egypt?

How did these plagues pour contempt on the idolatry of the Egyptians?

Did the Israelites suffer with the Egyptians from these plagues?

Was Pharaoh brought to penitence and submission?

Did he ever make any professions and promises?

What was the last plague which procured the release of Israel?

By what means were the families of Israel preserved, when the first-born of the Egyptians were slain?

How were the people of Israel provided for their journey?

Is there any thing remarkable concerning the time of their departure from Egypt?

IV. ISRAEL PASSING THROUGH THE RED SEA.

A. M. 2513.—B. C. 1491.

The children of Israel were now to travel to the land of Canaan, but they were to go under the especial direction and guidance of God, and not to choose their own way. That they might know from day to day the direction in which they were to move, the Lord went before them in a pillar of cloud by day, and a pillar of fire by night. This wonderful guide led them in a very mysterious way, which seemed to expose them to the greatest danger without a possibility of escape, for they were hedged in a narrow pass, between a chain of high mountains, with a tower or garrison on the west, and the Red Sea on the east; and Pharaoh, repenting that he had suffered them to depart, hastened to pursue after them with a mighty army, horses, and chariots of war.

On seeing the Egyptians pursuing them, the people were greatly afraid, and began to distrust God, and to reproach Moses; but Moses encouraged them with an assurance that God would work wonders for their preservation, and for the destruction of their enemies. At the command of God the people went forward, and Moses lifting his rod over the sea, the waters divided, and the people went through on dry ground.

The cloudy, fiery pillar which had hitherto passed before the people, now removed and rested behind them, casting a cheerful light towards the Israelites as they passed through the sea, but a dismal gloom to the Egyptians who pursued them. The Egyptians, however, were so infatuated as to follow into the channel of the sea; but from the cloudy pillar the Lord frowned upon them, which exceedingly affrighted them, and compelled them to acknowledge that the Lord fought for the Israelites and against them: they now attempted to retreat, but Moses being commanded again to stretch his hand over the sea, the waters returned upon the Egyptians, and in the morning Israel beheld them all dead upon the sea shore.

Then Moses and the children of Israel sang unto the Lord a song of grateful triumph. Miriam, also, the sister of Moses and Aaron, and a prophetess, accompanied by the women of Israel, sang the praises of the Lord, "Who is like unto thee, O Lord, among the gods? Who is like unto thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?"

Having passed the Red Sea, and entered the wilderness of Shur, the people came to Marah, where they found the waters bitter, and they murmured and complained for want of drink. Surely, they needed not distrust the Lord, who had wrought such wonders for them; least of all should they have murmured when He saw fit to try them thus, but they should have patiently endured the chastening of his hand, and have waited the displays of his mercy. Sinful as they were, the Lord was gracious and merciful towards them, and directed Moses to cast a certain tree into the waters, and they became sweet. Exodus xiii. xiv. xv.

QUESTIONS.

When Israel left Egypt, how did they know which way to take?

Did they go the shortest way to Canaan?

What was the first great difficulty to which they were exposed?

How did they get over the Red Sea?

Did the Egyptians overtake them?

Did the pillar of fire and cloud ever change its position towards the Israelites?

By whom was the deliverance of Israel celebrated in songs of praise?

What inconvenience did the people suffer at Marah?

How did they conduct themselves under it?

How was it remedied?

V. ISRAEL IN THE WILDERNESS

A. M. 2513.—B. C. 1491.

About a month after the people had quitted Egypt, they reached the wilderness of Zin. The provisions they brought with them were now nearly exhausted, and beginning to distrust for their future supply, they very wickedly murmured against Moses and Aaron for bringing them out of Egypt to perish in the wilderness. The Lord expressed his displeasure against them for their sin, but mercifully supplied their need, first, by causing vast numbers of quails to be driven towards them, and fall into the camp; the next day a miraculous supply of food called manna was rained down about their tents. This supply was afforded them daily, for a period of forty years. Every day each person went forth and gathered a sufficiency for his support, but none was to be kept till the morrow, that the people might learn to trust in God to give them day by day their daily bread. On the Sabbath-day no manna fell, but a double quantity fell the day before, and on that day they were permitted to keep it, and it always remained sweet and good; though when they attempted to keep it on other days, contrary to the Divine command, it became corrupt, and bred worms. Thus God was pleased to put honour on the Sabbath, and to teach us that nothing is gained by disobeying his commands, and nothing lost by faithfully serving Him.

Some time after the people came to Rephidim, where they were in distress for want of water, and again murmured grievously against Moses. In reading the history of the people of Israel, we may well wonder that they were not cut off for their sins. But the Lord was gracious and merciful to them, according to his promises made to their *ancestors. This mercy, however, was to Israel *as a nation*. Every individual had to answer for his own sins, and many were cut off or otherwise punished for their rebellions. When the people murmured, Moses prayed unto the Lord, and was commanded to strike the rock with his rod; which he did, and the waters gushed out in a stream that followed them. The name of this place was afterwards called Massah and Meribah, or *temptation* and *strife*, this being one of Israel's great temptations, provocations or strivings.

At this place Israel was attacked by the Amalekites, a fierce and warlike people. Joshua was sent forth, as the captain of Israel, with some chosen men to meet the enemy, and Moses,

Aaron, and Hur (one of the elders of Israel) ascended a mountain to watch the event of the battle, and to implore the Divine favour and protection for Israel. As long as Moses could hold up his hands in prayer, Joshua and the Israelites prevailed; but when his hands drooped through weariness, then Amalek gained the advantage. Aaron and Hur therefore supported his hands until the going down of the sun, and Joshua obtained a great victory over the Amalekites. This teaches us the power and efficacy of prayer. No means can succeed unless God give his blessing; and He will give it in answer to prayer. It also teaches us the duty of helping one another: "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ."

Moses was directed to make a record of this victory for the encouragement of Joshua and the people, that they might expect that God would give them farther victories until He had accomplished all that He had promised to them.

Moses also built an altar, and called it *JEHOVAH-nissi*, "the Lord my banner."

At this place, or at Sinai, where they next abode, Moses was visited by his father-in-law, Jethro, who brought with him Zipporah, the wife of Moses, and their two sons. They had a most affectionate and happy meeting, and joined together in praising the Lord for his goodness to the children of Israel. Jethro observing that Moses was overcharged with business, in attending to the different causes and complaints of all the people, advised him to appoint persons to assist him. This advice being sanctioned by the Divine approbation, was adopted, and seventy persons were appointed. After some time, Jethro returned to his own country. *Exod xvi.—xviii.*

QUESTIONS.

When the people had exhausted their provisions how were they supplied?

How long did the manna continue to fall?

Did it fall every day?

What miracle was wrought at Rephidim?

By what people were the Israelites attacked?

Who conducted the army of Israel?

How did Moses, Aaron, and Hur act on this occasion?

What was the result of the battle?

By whom was Moses visited?

VI. THE GIVING OF THE LAW FROM MOUNT SINAI.

A. M. 2513.—B. C. 1491.

About two months after their departure, the people came to *the wilderness of Sinai*. There God, having reminded them

of the deliverances he had wrought for them, was pleased to invite them to enter into a solemn covenant of obedience to all his commands. To this the people pledged themselves, and the Lord spake to Moses out of the thick cloud in the hearing of all the people.

Moses was commanded to set bounds round the mount; and to command the people during three days to prepare themselves with the utmost reverence and solemnity, for the communication which God was about to make to them.

On the third day the trumpet of the Lord sounded aloud, dreadful thunderings and lightnings, darkness, smoke, and earthquake, commanded the attention and reverence of the people, while the voice of God was heard speaking to Moses on the top of the mount. And the Ten Commandments or Moral Law was proclaimed in the audience of all the people. (The apostle Paul, writing to the Hebrews, strikingly describes this solemn scene, and shews the greater glory of the gospel dispensation.) Heb. xii. 18—29.

The people being exceedingly terrified at the awful scene, besought that the Lord would no more speak to them Himself, but that Moses might bring to them His declarations; but Moses encouraged them by the assurance that these awful discoveries were not intended for their destruction, but to caution them against sin and presumption. After this, many other laws were given to Moses.

Some of these laws were **moral*, or such as relate to our duty to God and our neighbour: these belong to all mankind, and will be binding as long as the world endures. (These are strikingly explained and enforced by our Lord in his Sermon on the Mount, Matt. v. vi. vii.) Others of these laws were **ceremonial*, and respected the worship of God among the Jewish people. Many very particular directions were given about building a **tabernacle*, or place of worship, and the priests who were to officiate in it; also about the sacrifices that were to be offered, and the manner of sprinkling of blood, and washing with water. These observances were as opposite as possible to those of idolatry, and were intended to preserve the Jews from the superstitions and evil customs of heathen nations. They were also calculated to impress on the minds of the worshippers the vast importance of their sins being pardoned, and their nature purified; and while they kept alive the believing expectation of the great Atonement which God had promised, they served as types to set forth the blessings of the gospel. These observances were in force till Christ died, and no longer; for when the

Truth and Substance appeared, it was fit that the types and shadows should pass away. (The Epistle to the Hebrews is expressly designed to explain this.) Many laws also were given at Sinai which were *national*, and respected the Jewish people only, viz. such as related to the division of their land—the inheriting of property—the claims of masters and servants—the punishment of injuries—and many others of similar import. These particular rules about common things seem chiefly designed to distinguish the Jews from all other nations, as God's own people, and to remind them that the Lord was their King, to whom they owed national as well as individual obedience.

When the principal part of these laws had been delivered to Moses, he came and told them to the people, who promised obedience. Moses then wrote the precepts in a book, called the Book of the Covenant. He also set up an altar to signify the presence of Jehovah, and twelve pillars, as representing the twelve tribes of Israel; and, acting as typical *Mediator between God and the people, he offered sacrifices, and sprinkled part of the blood on the altar, part on the book, and part on the people, and thus Israel became a people separated by covenant unto the Lord. (To this covenant the apostle Paul alludes, Heb. ix. 18—20.) After this, Moses remained forty days and forty nights in the Mount, receiving more particular instructions concerning the *tabernacle, the *priests, and *sacrifices; his servant Joshua also remaining near at hand, though not in the immediate presence of God, as Moses was; and the Lord gave unto Moses two tables of stone, on which were written the ten commandments, by the finger of God himself. Exod. xix.—xxxi.

QUESTIONS.

- What particular dispensation took place about two months after the Israelites left Egypt?
- Where was the law given?
- What peculiar solemnities attended the giving of the law?
- In which of the *Epistles of the New Testament is most allusion made to this subject?
- What is the use of the moral law?
- Do its obligations extend to all mankind in all ages?
- What was the design of the *ceremonial law?
- When did it cease to be in force?
- Why were such particular laws given to the Jewish nation about common things?
- How long did Moses remain in the mount, receiving these laws?
- By whom was the moral law first written on tables of stone?

VII. THE GOLDEN CALF, AND OTHER TRANSACTIONS IN THE WILDERNESS.

A. M. 2513.—B. C. 1491.

During the long absence of Moses the people became impatient, forgetful of the terrors they had lately experienced; and, unmindful of the promises they had made of being faithful and obedient unto God, they prevailed on Aaron to assist them in making a golden calf, which they worshipped as their deliverer from Egypt, and which they called upon to guide them in their future movements. What a picture of the folly and inconsistency of human nature! It teaches us to be very humble, and not to rely on our own strength. The strongest vows will not prove sufficient to bind us from the grossest sin and folly, unless we are constantly seeking strength from God to enable us to keep them.

Before Moses quitted the mount, the Lord informed him of the sin which the people had committed; and so awfully was the displeasure of God kindled against them, that He threatened utterly to destroy them, and offered to make of Moses a great nation; but Moses interceded with God to spare his people, and fulfil the promises He had made to them; and, notwithstanding their wickedness, the Lord repented of the evil which He thought to do them.

As Moses and Joshua came down from the mount, and drew near to the camp of Israel, they heard the people shouting and dancing round the idol they had made; and Moses being exceedingly grieved at their wickedness, cast from him the tables of stone, and brake them beneath the mount, to shew that Israel had broken the covenant of God, and deserved to be deprived of all its blessings. He also took the idol, burnt it in the fire, ground it to powder, scattered it in water, and made the people drink of it. Having severely reprimanded Aaron for the share he had taken in this abominable transaction, Moses called upon those who had steadfastly adhered to the Lord, to gather themselves together unto him, and execute the righteous vengeance of God against the ringleaders of this riot. Accordingly the Levites assembled, and slew of the most guilty about 3,000 men, and a plague from the Lord visited others. After this, Moses made earnest intercession with the Lord for Aaron and for the people; and the Lord promised to fulfil his intention of bestowing upon them the land of Canaan, and engaged to be among them as heretofore.

On this occasion Moses personally received signal testimonies of the Divine favour. To him was granted a view of the glory of God, as far as the frailty of human nature could admit, so that it was said of Moses that he saw God face to face, and conversed with Him, as a man with his friend. After this, Moses again abode forty days in the mount with God, during which time he received further instructions, and wrote on two tables of stone the words of the covenant, and the ten commandments, and when, at the end of the forty days he returned to the people, his face shone so, that the Israelites could not bear to look upon him, and he covered his face with a vail. "The righteous is more excellent than his neighbour," and he that lives a life of piety and obedience sheds a lustre around him, which even the wicked see and admire.

Among many other directions which Moses received in the mount, he was commanded to set apart Aaron and his sons to be *priests of the Lord. Accordingly, when the tabernacle and its furniture were completed, and the garments of the priesthood prepared, Aaron and his sons were *consecrated with sacrifices as the Lord had appointed. The cloud of the Divine glory then rested upon, and filled the newly erected tabernacle, and fire from heaven consumed the first sacrifice. This fire was never permitted to go out, but was carefully preserved to consume the sacrifices that were henceforth offered from day to day. The cloud resting on the tabernacle, or on the *ark of the covenant, from that time went before the children of Israel and directed all their movements; and there the Lord promised to hear and answer the prayers of his people. *Exod. xxiii.—xl.*

QUESTIONS.

What occurred in the camp of Israel during the long absence of Moses?

How did Aaron act on this occasion?

What was threatened against the people of Israel for this sin?

Did Moses concur in the threatened destruction of Israel?

What was the result of his *intercession?

Were the people in any way punished?

What particular honour was put upon Moses?

Did Moses return to the mount for further instructions?

What family was *consecrated to the priests' office?

What took place when the *tabernacle was set up and the priests were consecrated.

VIII. FURTHER TRANSACTIONS IN THE WILDERNESS.

A. M. 2513.—B. C. 1491.

Shortly after the *consecration of Aaron and his sons to the priestly office, two of his sons, Nadab and Abihu transgressed the commandment of the Lord by putting into their *censers of incense strange fire, *i. e.* common fire, fire not lighted at that which came down from heaven; and immediately there came forth fire from the Lord and consumed them. This awful judgment should impress on our minds the solemn truth that God will be had in reverence of all them that are round about Him. Let us never regard exact obedience in the worship of God a trifle or a thing of no consequence, but be concerned in every thing to obey his commands, and especially to worship Him who is a spirit in spirit and in truth. Under this painful bereavement, Aaron was enabled to manifest holy submission to the will of God. He "held his peace." Lev. x. 1—7.

Not long after this, the son of an Israelitish woman named Shelomith, but whose father was an Egyptian, having a quarrel with a man of Israel, in the heat of his fury he blasphemed the name of the Lord, and cursed. At the command of God he was stoned to death by all the congregation of Israel. How carefully ought we to guard against rash and sinful anger, and especially against taking the name of the Lord our God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless, that taketh his name in vain. Lev. xxiv. 10—16.

After remaining about a year in the wilderness of Sinai, the tribes, at the movement of the sacred cloud, proceeded in their appointed order towards the wilderness of Paran. Wherever the ark moved, Moses prayed that the power of God might protect His people and confound their enemies; and when the ark rested, he prayed that the presence and blessing of God might rest among the thousands of Israel. Numb. x.

Notwithstanding the goodness and mercy of God towards them, the people still continued perverse and rebellious. On one occasion we are told they murmured, and the Lord was displeased and sent forth a fire which burned them in the uttermost parts of the camp. At the intercession of Moses the fire was stayed, but the place was called Taberah, or *burning*.

After this, the people inordinately desired flesh to eat, and broke into open murmuring. They distrusted the power

and providence of God, which they had already so richly experienced, and they despised the provision with which they were so highly favoured, calling the manna "light food." The Lord heard the voice of their murmuring, and in anger, not in mercy, He indulged their desire for flesh, by sending them a vast abundance of quails, enough to supply them—not as in the former instance a single day, but a whole month. But the wrath of God followed their sensual indulgence: a plague from the Lord cut off the fattest of them; those who had most eagerly desired and had most intemperately fed on the luxurious diet. Many fell there, and the place was called *Kibroth hattaavah*, or the *graves of lust*. How wise is the injunction, "Be content with such things as ye have." (Heb. xiii. 5,) and how suitable the prayer, "Feed me with food convenient for me." Prov. xxx. 8.

From this place the people journeyed to Hazeroth; while they abode there, Miriam and Aaron indulged the sin of envy against their brother Moses, and murmured that they had not equal authority with him. Moses was a very meek and humble man, and he did not resent their unkindness; but the Lord saw fit to interpose: and Miriam, (who had been the most guilty) was visited with a leprosy, which, though it was healed at the intercession of her injured brother, obliged her to be shut out of the camp seven days." Num. xi. xii.

QUESTIONS.

- What occasioned the death of two of Aaron's sons?
- What was the crime, and what the punishment of Shelomith's son?
- What was Moses' prayer when the ark removed, and when it rested?
- What signal punishment was inflicted on the people for murmuring?
- What indulgence was granted them when they despised the manna and desired flesh?
- Was this indulgence granted in mercy or in anger?
- What punishment followed?
- What offence did Miriam and Aaron commit, and how was Miriam punished?

IX. THE SPIES SENT TO SEARCH OUT THE LAND OF CANAAN.

A. M. 2515.—B. C. 1489.

The people had now reached the borders of the promised land, and Moses said to them "Ye are come to the mountain of the Amorites which the Lord our God doth give unto us. Behold the Lord thy God hath set the land before thee; go *p* and possess it, as the Lord God of thy fathers hath said

unto thee, fear not, neither be discouraged." Deut. i. 20, 21. But the people proposed first to send up twelve men, one of each tribe, to view the land, and bring them an account of it. This was quite needless, for God had told them that it was a good land, and that they should possess it; and had they been truly believing and obedient, they would have relied on his word, and have gone up and taken possession of it. Of the twelve spies, only two, viz. Joshua and Caleb, were men of faith and courage. The rest were all terrified at the people who dwelt in the land, and said it was impossible to conquer them. They could not help admitting that it was a good land, for they brought, as a specimen of its fruits, one bunch of grapes, of such a size as to be borne between two of them; but they discouraged the people by telling them of the difficulty of obtaining possession. Caleb assured the people that they were abundantly able to go up and possess the land in the strength of God, who had promised to be their helper; but the people believed rather the discouraging report of the other spies, and gave themselves up to discontent and despondency, vainly wishing that they had never quitted Egypt, and even proposing to appoint themselves a captain and return thither. Moses and Aaron fell on their faces before the Lord, trembling for his displeasure against this perverse people; and Joshua and Caleb said and did all they could to persuade them to obey the commandment of the Lord, and to trust in his power and promises. But instead of hearkening unto them, the people even attempted to stone them. At this moment the glory of the Lord was seen on the tabernacle, and the rebels were silenced and confounded. Again the Lord threatened to cut off this wicked and incorrigible people, and to make of Moses a great nation. But Moses again interceded, especially pleading the name by which Jehovah had been pleased to make himself known as "the Lord, long-suffering, and of great mercy, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin." And at his word the Lord refrained from destroying the rebels, and cutting off Israel as a nation; but at the same time declared that not one of those who had despised the good land should ever enter it. Accordingly they were sentenced to wander forty years in the wilderness, till all who had then attained to years of maturity had fallen by death; but their little ones, whom they had said should be a prey, were to be preserved, and after forty years brought to possess the land which their fathers had despised. Joshua and Caleb alone, who had honoured the Lord by their faith and obedience, and followed Him fully with all their

heart, were exempt from the general decree, and spared to inherit the good land. The ten unbelieving spies were immediately cut off by pestilence, and the people were directed to return into the wilderness towards the Red Sea. But now they were as obstinately bent on going up to possess the land, as they had before been disobedient in refusing to do it; and though Moses entreated them to submit themselves to the Lord, and assured them that this act of rebellion would not prosper, they went to the hill top, where they were met by the Amalekites and Canaanites, who soon conquered them. Numb. xiv.

QUESTIONS.

- When the Israelites arrived at the borders of Canaan, did they at once go up to possess it?
 What report did the spies bring of the land?
 Who were the two spies that gave a different report?
 Did the people hearken to the ten, or to the two?
 Was the displeasure of God manifested against their unbelief?
 What sentence went forth against all the people, except Caleb and Joshua?
 What punishment immediately befell the ten spies?
 How long had the people to wander in the wilderness because of their sins?
 Did they after this attempt to gain possession of Canaan?
 What was the result of this attempt?

X. FURTHER TRANSACTIONS IN THE WILDERNESS.

A. M. 2515.—B. C. 1489.

Among the many laws given to the Israelites, those for the observance of the Sabbath were very strict and explicit, and any transgression must needs be a presumptuous sin, because when it was so expressly stated what they were to do and what they were not to do, they could not possibly plead ignorance; but just after these commands were given, a man was found gathering sticks on the Sabbath-day, and as a presumptuous offender he was sentenced to be stoned to death.

Some time afterwards a daring rebellion broke out among the people. It originated with Korah, a Levite, who envied Aaron and his sons the honour of the priesthood, which God had seen fit to confine to that family, and aspired at sharing it with him. He won over Dathan and Abiram with two hundred and fifty of the princes, who joined in upbraiding Moses and Aaron as taking too much honour to themselves. Moses in vain attempted to convince them of the sin of thus *despising the dominion and rule that God had established*

among them. And the Lord in awful judgment interposed, causing the earth to open and swallow up Dathan, Abiram, and the family of Korah, with all their goods; while at the same time fire from the Lord consumed Korah and his company who stood with *censers at the door of the tabernacle, to offer incense, which was the office of the priests only. But even this awful expression of the Divine displeasure did not quell the tumultuous disposition of the people. Instead of humbling themselves under the mighty hand of God, they murmured against Moses and Aaron as having caused the death of the rebels, whom they called the Lord's people. A plague from the Lord was sent forth to punish this new rebellion. But Aaron filled his censer with incense, and hastened to make atonement for the people. He ran in with his censer between the living and the dead and so the plague was stayed, but not till many thousands had fallen by its ravages. What a dreadful thing is sin, that calls forth such expressions of anger from the God of mercy and compassion, and pours such calamities on men!

Further to convince the people that Aaron was indeed appointed by God to the priesthood, and had not taken the honour on himself, the Lord was pleased to work a special miracle. The head of every tribe was commanded to bring a rod or staff, all cut from the same tree, each having the name of the tribe on it, except that of Levi, which was to bear the name of Aaron. These rods were laid in the tabernacle all night, and on the morrow it was found that Aaron's rod alone had produced the leaves, blossoms, and fruits of almonds, while all the other rods remained barren. This rod was laid up in the ark as a * memorial to all generations that Aaron and his family were chosen to minister before the Lord. Numb. xv. xvi.

QUESTIONS.

How was the Sabbath-breaker punished?

With whom did the next rebellion originate?

What punishment befell Dathan and Abiram?

What punishment was inflicted on Korah and his company?

Were the people humbled by these judgments, or did they murmur at them?

With what new judgment were they visited?

By what new miracle was the appointment of Aaron *attested?

XI. THE DEATH OF MIRIAM, AND TRANSGRESSION OF MOSES AND AARON.—DEATH OF AARON.

A. M. 2552.—B. C. 1452.

We are not told much of the history of the people during their long wanderings in the wilderness; but in the first month of the fortieth year they were at Kadesh in the wilderness of Zin and on the borders of the land of Canaan. There Miriam died and was buried.

At this place the people were in want of water, and the new generation, imitating the rebellion of their fathers, gave way to murmuring and despondency, and contended with their leaders. Moses and Aaron prayed, and inquired of the Lord, and were directed to take the rod as a token of the Divine presence and power, and to speak to the rock in the presence of the people, and it should yield them water in abundance. But on this occasion these good men erred in their spirit and conduct. Instead of speaking to the rock, Moses spake harshly and unadvisedly to the people, and thrice smote the rock, saying, "Ye rebels, must *we* fetch you water out of this rock?" as if the work and the glory in some degree belonged to them. It pleased God however to grant the needed supply; the stream burst forth abundantly for the supply of them and their cattle. But in consequence of this transgression, Moses and Aaron were excluded from entering Canaan, and the water and the rock were called *Meribah*, or strife, for there God strove with his people, and was awful in justice as well as abundant in mercy. This is not the same place mentioned in p. 59; that was *Meribah Massah*, this *Meribah Kadesh*.

The direct road to Canaan, lay through a part of the land of Edom inhabited by the descendants of Esau. The Israelites asked leave to pass through, promising to do no injury. But the Edomites refused this, and threatened them with the sword. Yet the Israelites were not suffered to trespass or molest them, but took a long circuit round their country. Those who profess to be the people of God, should be examples of forbearance and respect to the rights of others, even when they are treated by them with unkindness.

On the road from Kadesh to Canaan, Aaron was called to die. At the command of God, Moses took Aaron in his priestly robes, and Eleazer his son, to Mount Hor, in the sight of all the *congregation. The garments were then taken from Aaron, and put upon his son, who thenceforward became

*high-priest, and Aaron immediately expired, greatly lamented by all the people. Numbers xx.

QUESTIONS.

- Who died at Kadesh?
- What else happened there?
- How did Moses and Aaron *transgress?
- Why was the place called Meribah?
- Which was the direct road to Canaan?
- Why did not the people pass that way?
- What took place at mount Hor?
- Who was *high-priest after Aaron?

XII. THE BRAZEN SERPENT.—SIHON AND OG.—BALAAM.

A. M. 2553.—B. C. 1451.

Before they quitted mount Hor, Arad, one of the kings of the Canaanites attacked the people, and took some prisoners. In their distress they cried unto the Lord, and He gave them victory over their enemies.

Soon after this, the people again murmured, at the length and difficulty of the way. They also experienced some scarcity of water, and became again dissatisfied with the manna, which they called light bread. The Lord was greatly displeased at these murmurs, and sent among the people fiery flying serpents, which bit or stung many of the people to death. When thus visited, they acknowledged their sin, and entreated Moses to pray for the removal of this dreadful scourge. Moses did so, and the Lord commanded him to make a brazen serpent, and set it on a high pole, in sight of all the camp; and to tell the people that whoever was bitten on looking at this serpent should be healed. They did so, and were healed accordingly. This is a lively type or emblem of our Lord Jesus Christ being lifted up on the cross to die for the sin of man, and that those who are wounded by sin, may look upon Him by repentance and faith, and receive pardon, peace, and everlasting salvation. Our Lord himself taught us this, when He said, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth on Him might not perish, but have eternal life." John iii. 14, 15.

After this the people went on, and at last encamped on the plain of Moab in the east of Canaan. There they wanted water, and the Lord mercifully supplied them.

They were now come to the land of the Amorites, which was indeed part of the land promised to them; but they did

not expect at that time to possess it, and only wished to pass peaceably through. This they requested of Sihon the king. He not only refused them, but came out to attack them. God gave to Israel a complete victory over the Amorites. Sihon was slain, and all his dominions taken possession of by the Israelites, as the first fruits of their conquests.

Having driven out the Amorites, the people next proceeded by the way of Bashan. Og, king of that country, was a giant very fierce and formidable; yet God commanded the people to attack him, and gave them a complete victory, so that his lands also became their possession.

The king of Moab hearing of these victories of Israel, became greatly alarmed, and joined in council with the princes of Midian. They need not have been afraid, for Israel had been expressly forbidden to molest any of the descendants of Lot or Esau, and the Moabites were descended from Lot. However, Balak, king of Moab, and the princes of the Midianites agreed together, to hire a celebrated *soothsayer, named Balaam, to come and curse the people of Israel, by which means they hoped to prevail against them. Balaam was a man of great knowledge. Though he dwelt among a heathen people, he knew that Jehovah was the only true God, and that Israel was his people; but Balaam was a wicked and covetous man, and was willing to do any thing for the love of gain. When Balak and the princes of Moab sent to him, offering him great rewards, he was very willing to go with them, but professed to ask counsel of God. It sometimes pleased God, for wise reasons, to make known his will, even to wicked men, and to compel them to utter it. He did so in the case of Balaam, and expressly forbade him to go to curse the people of Israel, for they were a people whom God had blessed. Balaam said to the messengers that he dared not go with them,—but it was plain that his heart was all along set on going, and receiving the reward of unrighteousness. Balak sent to him again with an offer of still greater rewards. At length Balaam was permitted to go. We are not by this to suppose that it became lawful and right for him to do that which was in itself sinful, but that God gave him up to follow the devices of his own wicked heart, and take the dreadful consequences. On his journey, Balaam was met by the angel of the Lord, who stood in the way, once more to warn him of his wickedness. Balaam saw not the angel, but the ass on which he rode saw a dreadful vision, and turned aside. Balaam, with much fury, smote *the beast*, who was miraculously enabled to speak as with

a man's voice, and forbade the madness of the prophet. The angel reproved him for his cruelty and perverseness, and told him that his journey was highly offensive to God. He, however, proceeded; and when he came to the land of Moab he joined Balak in offering several idolatrous sacrifices, and then attempted to curse the people. But the Lord compelled him again and again to pronounce Israel a most blessed people, and one that should triumph over all its enemies. Indeed, he was so fully convinced of their happiness, that he said, "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his." The worst of men may have such a wish as this; but it is quite in vain for any who do not live the life of the righteous to hope to die their death. After repeatedly attempting to comply with Balak's wicked desire in cursing Israel, Balaam was at last disgraced, and sent away without his promised reward.

After this, the people of Midian and Moab, at the wicked suggestion of Balaam, pretended to be very friendly with Israel, and invited them to attend their feasts. By this means they were drawn into idolatry and great wickedness, and the anger of the Lord was kindled against them. Some of the most hardened transgressors were cut off by the sword of the magistrate, and many more fell by a plague from the Lord. The number who perished amounted to twenty-four thousand—a sad proof that the greatest injury our bitterest enemies can inflict on us, is by obtaining our consent to sin. Israel was invincible as long as the people remained faithful and obedient to God; but when they fell into sin, sorrow inevitably followed.

After this, God commanded Israel to avenge themselves of the Midianites; and a vast slaughter of that wicked people was made by the sword of Israel; but not one of the Israelites was slain. Among those who fell was Balaam, the wicked prophet.

The two tribes of Reuben and Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh, having much cattle, were permitted by Moses to settle in the lands already conquered,—but on condition that they should go over Jordan and assist their brethren in conquering the land of Canaan. Numbers xxi. xxv. xxxi. xxxii.

QUESTIONS.

What new discontents were among the people?

How were they punished?

What was the appointed means of this miraculous cure?

Was the brazen serpent a type of any other healing?
 What was the first people whom the Israelites conquered?
 What was the second?
 Who was sent for by the king of Moab to curse Israel?
 Did he do wickedly in going?
 How was he rebuked on his journey?
 Was Balaam permitted to curse Israel?
 What became of Balaam at last?

XIII. THE NUMBERING OF THE PEOPLE, AND THE DEATH OF MOSES.

A. M. 2553.—B. C. 1451.

After the *transgression of Israel with the Midianites, but before the vengeance inflicted on that people, Moses and Eleazer, the high-priest, were commanded to number the children of Israel from twenty years old and upwards; when it appeared that not one remained, excepting Caleb and Joshua, of those who were numbered at Sinai, and who were of age to fall in with the unbelief that shut them out of Canaan. That generation having passed away in the wilderness, it only remained that Moses (on whom a like sentence had been passed, for his *transgression at Meribah) should die, and Israel should enter into Canaan. Moses humbly and earnestly besought the Lord that he might be permitted to go over Jordan and behold the goodly land, but this was denied,—he only saw it from a distance.

Being informed by God of his approaching departure, Moses earnestly implored that a successor might be appointed. The Lord was pleased to grant his request, and appointed Joshua, who had been long tried as a man of wisdom and courage, faith and piety. Joshua was publicly acknowledged by the people, and Moses gave him a solemn charge in their presence. The short remainder of his time Moses spent in giving particular directions for the division of the promised land, in *recapitulating the mercies of God towards the people, in urging them to fidelity and obedience, and in foretelling the blessing that should be bestowed upon them if they were obedient, and the dreadful punishments they would incur by disobedience. These instructions were summed up in a song, or poetical prophecy, which Moses rehearsed to the people, and commanded them to teach their children in all generations. After this, Moses solemnly and affectionately blessed the tribes, in a manner which their *subsequent history fully verified.

Moses then went up to the top of Pisgah, one of the mountains of Nebo, over against Jericho, whence he could take an extensive view of the promised land. And he died there, according to the word of the Lord, and the Lord buried him, but no man ever knew the place of his sepulchre. At the time of his death Moses was an hundred and twenty years old, but his sight and strength were as vigorous as they had ever been, the Lord having thus remarkably fitted him for his arduous work. He was also declared to be the most eminent and highly honoured of all the prophets, as he was admitted to more immediate and intimate communion with God.

The wish of Moses to go over Jordan and enter the land of Canaan, was very natural; but his loss was far more than made up in being removed to heaven, of which Canaan and all its pleasures formed but a feeble type. Numbers xxvi. xxvii.—Deut. throughout.

The chapters in Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, to which no special reference is made, are chiefly occupied with particular laws.

Together with the period of sacred history now completed, should be read Psalms lxxviii. xcv. cv. cvii. cxxxv. cxxxvi.

QUESTIONS.

For what purpose were the people numbered by Moses and Eleazer?

Why was not Moses permitted to enter Canaan?

Who was appointed as the successor of Moses?

How did Moses employ the closing period of his life?

Was Moses feeble with old age?

Where did Moses die?

What is said of his burial?

What Psalms particularly refer to the children of Israel in Egypt, in the wilderness, and as obtaining possession of Canaan?

PERIOD V.

ESTABLISHMENT OF ISRAEL IN CANAAN, AND GOVERNMENT OF THE JUDGES.

I. THE PASSAGE OVER JORDAN, AND CONQUEST OF JERICHO.

A. M. 2553.—B. C. 1451.

As soon as Moses was dead, God was pleased to speak to Joshua, and encourage him in the great work to which he was now called, by assuring him that as He had been with Moses

and upheld him in all his ways, so would He be with him also. Thus encouraged, Joshua directed the people to prepare for crossing Jordan, and entering the promised land; and they readily and solemnly promised to be faithful and obedient, if the Lord was, indeed, with Joshua, as He had been with Moses. In the strength of the Lord the feeblest may be made strong, and if He is our helper we need not fear engaging in any enterprise, however arduous, or meeting any trial, however severe.

The first thing Joshua did was to send spies to judge of the state of the land, and the best mode of attacking it. The spies went to Jericho, and lodged in the house of a woman named Rahab. She believed that God would give the land to the people of Israel, and therefore she was kind to the spies and hid them from the pursuit of the king of Jericho, who sought their lives. In the Epistle to the Hebrews we are told that, "by faith" she was saved from perishing with them that believed not, (Heb. xi. 31,) for she entreated the spies to shew the same kindness to her as she had shewn to them, and to preserve her life, and that of her family, when the city of Jericho should be destroyed, which was done accordingly. Rahab was afterwards married into one of the families of Israel, and had the honour of being numbered among those of whom Christ came, according to the flesh.

When the spies returned, they told Joshua and the people that it would be easy for them to obtain possession of the land, for that the people already fainted for fear of them.

The people were then brought near to the river Jordan, where they abode three days, and were directed to observe and follow the movements of the ark, for that the Lord was about to work a wonderful miracle on their behalf, which miracle should encourage them to expect the fulfilment of whatever else the Lord had promised them.

When the priests, who carried the *ark before the people, came to the very verge of Jordan, they were directed to proceed, and the moment their feet touched the brim, the waters retreated as an heap on each side, and the priests stood still with the ark in the midst of the river, while the people went through upon dry ground. Before the priests quitted the river, twelve large stones were taken out of the midst of the river, and were set up for a *monument in the adjoining plain of Gilgal, that in future ages children might ask their parents what these stones meant, and so the remembrance of the goodness of God might be perpetuated to all generations.

When the Israelites passed over Jordan, it wanted five days of forty years from the time of their quitting Egypt. That time was employed in performing the rite of circumcision, which, in many cases, had been neglected during their wanderings in the wilderness, and in preparing for and celebrating the feast of the *passover. The pressure of important business ought not to be made an excuse for neglecting sacred *ordinances; on the contrary, the exercises of religion are the best preparatives for entering on important worldly engagements in a proper frame of mind.

The day after the feast of the passover, the people began to eat the produce of the land of Canaan, and from that day the manna ceased, being no longer necessary. Thus, in every particular, the Divine care and faithfulness were displayed, and at the same time the people were taught that when ordinary means were within their reach, they were not to expect extraordinary supplies.

The first city of Canaan that the Israelites were to attack was Jericho. In this enterprise Joshua was encouraged by a *vision which he beheld of ONE with a drawn sword against Jericho, who engaged to be with them as Captain of the Lord's host, and to give them the victory over all their enemies. He also directed Joshua to attack the city in a most singular manner, one that would try the faith and obedience of the people, and shew beyond a doubt, both to them and their enemies, that it was God alone who gave them the victory. The army of Israel was to go round the city daily, the priests also bearing the ark of the covenant, and seven priests going before with trumpets of rams' horns. This they did six days, and returned to the camp. On the seventh day they went round the city seven times; and on the seventh time, when the priests blew with the trumpets, Joshua said to the people, "Shout, for the Lord hath given you the city;" and when they shouted, the walls of the city fell flat, so the people went up and took the city without difficulty.

This was a very wicked and hardened people, and the Lord commanded that they should be utterly destroyed; but before this dreadful command was executed, the two spies were sent to secure Rahab and all her family; after that, the city was destroyed by fire. In this city there was great spoil; but, as the first fruits of the land of Canaan, the Lord God was pleased to command that all silver and gold should be brought into the *treasury of the Lord, and all other things consumed by fire; and the people were *especially charged not to take any thing whatever for them-*

and upheld him in all his ways, so would He be with them. Thus encouraged, Joshua directed the people to pass over the Jordan, and entering the promised land; he readily and solemnly promised to be faithful and obedient to the Lord was, indeed, with Joshua, as He had been with Moses. In the strength of the Lord the feeble became made strong, and if He is our helper we need not be engaging in any enterprise, however arduous, or in any trial, however severe.

The first thing Joshua did was to send spies to reconnoitre the state of the land, and the best mode of attacking it. The spies went to Jericho, and lodged in the house of a woman named Rahab. She believed that God would give victory to the people of Israel, and therefore she was kind to the spies and hid them from the pursuit of the king of the Amorites who sought their lives. In the Epistle to the Hebrews we are told that, "by faith" she was saved from perishing with them that believed not, (Heb. xi. 31,) for she entreated the king's spies to shew the same kindness to her as she had shewn to the spies, and to preserve her life, and that of her family, when the city of Jericho should be destroyed, which was done accordingly. Rahab was afterwards married into one of the families of Israel, and had the honour of being numbered among those of whom Christ came, according to the flesh.

When the spies returned, they told Joshua and the people that it would be easy for them to obtain possession of the land, for that the people already fainted for fear of them.

The people were then brought near to the river Jordan, where they abode three days, and were directed to pass over and follow the movements of the ark, for that the Lord was about to work a wonderful miracle on their behalf. The miracle should encourage them to expect the fulfilment of whatever else the Lord had promised them.

When the priests, who carried the ark before them, came to the very verge of Jordan, they were directed to dismount and proceed, and the moment their feet touched the waters, the waters retreated as an heap on each side, and the people stood still with the ark in the midst of the river, and the people went through upon dry ground. Before the ark quitted the river, twelve large stones were taken up and set up in the midst of the river, and were set up for a monument to the adjoining plain of Gilgal, that in future ages children might ask their parents what these stones meant, and so the remembrance of the goodness of God might be perpetual to all generations.

selves; they were also forbidden at any time to rebuild the city. Josh. i.—vi.

QUESTIONS.

After the death of Moses, how was Joshua encouraged to take the charge of Israel?

What was the first great enterprise for which Joshua directed the people to prepare?

What did the people promise Joshua?

How did Joshua form a judgment of the state of the land?

What was the conduct of Rahab towards the spies?

How was her faith rewarded?

Was there any bridge over the river Jordan?

How then did the people pass over?

What was done to perpetuate the remembrance of this miracle?

What religious services were observed as soon as the people entered Canaan?

Did they continue to feed upon manna?

What was the first city of Canaan that the Israelites attacked?

In what manner did they attack it?

What success followed?

What family was preserved when Jericho was destroyed?

II. THE CONQUEST OF CANAAN CONTINUED.

Notwithstanding the strict prohibition that had been given, some were found presumptuous enough to take of the spoils of Jericho. The Divine displeasure against this offence was speedily manifested. The next city they attacked was Ai; but though it was a small city, and but feebly defended in comparison of Jericho, the Israelites could not prevail against it, but fled before their enemies. When Joshua and the elders bowed before the Lord, and bewailed their defeat, they were told that the Lord had withdrawn from them, because that iniquity was hid in the camp. Joshua was also directed how to proceed in detecting and punishing the offender. By a signal interposition of God, from whom no secrets are hid, first the *tribe of Judah was pointed out, then the *family of Zarhi. In that family the *household of Zabdi, and in that, the guilty individual, Achan, the son of Carmi. Joshua, with great solemnity and tenderness, urged him, by a free confession of his guilt, to glorify the God of Israel, who had thus singled him out. He did so, in the most circumstantial and affecting manner: "When I saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment, and two hundred *shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight, then I *coveted* them, and *took* them, and behold they are hid in the earth in the midst of my tent, and the silver under it." What an affecting warning! Let us never forget that He who knows the human heart has not

only said, "Thou shalt not *steal*," but has commanded us not to "*covet*," nor even to "*look upon*," that which is forbidden. The guilty individual was immediately stoned to death, and all his possessions were burnt. A great heap of stones was raised over him as a memorial of the melancholy transaction; and the name of the valley was called *Achor*, or *Trouble*.

When the accursed thing was thus cleared out of the camp, Joshua again attacked Ai, and soon conquered it. The king of the city was slain, and the Israelites obtained possession of great spoil.

In all that Joshua did he was very observant of the commands of God, and the charges which had been left by his servant Moses. Among other things, Moses had directed Joshua, that on two mountains of Canaan, called Gerizim and Ebal, the people should renew their covenant with the Lord, and in their hearing should be pronounced the blessings and curses recorded by Moses, to which they should all solemnly assent. (Deut. xxvii. xxviii.) This was punctually fulfilled as soon as ever they obtained access to those mountains.

When the other kings of Canaan heard of the conquest of Jericho and Ai, they leagued themselves together to withstand Israel; but it was all in vain, for the Lord was with Israel, and gave them the victory. One people only, called Gibeonites, craftily won over Joshua and the elders to make a treaty with them. They pretended to come from a far country, though, in fact, they dwelt close by. In this instance Israel erred in not asking counsel of the Lord before they made a league with the people. They soon found out how they had been imposed upon; but having solemnly engaged to spare the Gibeonites, they were obliged to do so. They were permitted to live among the Israelites, but in the meanest servitude, as hewers of wood and drawers of water. When the other kings heard that the Gibeonites had made alliance with Joshua, they came out to war against them; and Joshua and the army of Israel were called upon to protect and fight for them. The Lord was pleased to give to Israel a complete victory—their enemies fled before them, and as they fled the Lord sent hailstones of such amazing size, and directed in so wonderful a manner, that, though they slew the Canaanites in great multitudes, they did not fall on those who pursued them. Moreover, to enable Israel to pursue the conquest to the utmost, a most signal miracle was wrought; for, at the word of Joshua, the motion of the sun and moon was staid for the space of twelve or fourteen hours, and daylight continued until the people had avenged themselves of their enemies.

Thus, by degrees, the chief part of the land of Canaan was conquered by Israel under Joshua, and divided among the tribes by lot and by line, according to the directions given to Moses; and it ought not to be overlooked, that the prophecies of Jacob, (Gen. xlix.) and those of Moses, (Deut. xxxiii.) were exactly fulfilled in the lots given under Joshua, but over which he had no control. We cannot but discern in this the unerring counsel and overruling hand of God.

When Joshua entered Canaan he was an old man; yet he was spared many years to promote and to witness the fulfilment of God's promises to Israel. Before his death he solemnly appealed to the people of the goodness and faithfulness of God to them, and urged them to be faithful and obedient in His service. Joshua had, perhaps, already seen that they were in danger of being tempted to fall into the idolatry of other nations, for he thus appealed to them: "If it seem evil to you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom ye will serve; but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." All young persons, like the Israelites, are called upon to choose whom they will serve; and those who have longest and most faithfully served God, like Joshua, can testify that His service is perfect freedom, and in keeping His commandments there is great reward. The people solemnly covenanted to serve the Lord; and Joshua made a record of the transaction by writing it in the book of the law, and by setting up a stone for a pillar of witness. Shortly after this Joshua died, and was honourably buried in his own possession; and the people continued to serve the Lord while Joshua lived, and those of his *contemporaries who survived him. When Israel was settled in Canaan, the bones of Joseph were buried according to his dying request. Josh. vii.—xxiv. A. M. 2577.—B. C. 1427.

QUESTIONS.

What special injunction was given relative to the spoil of Jericho?

Was it in any instance transgressed?

How was the offender detected?

How was he punished?

What was done on the Mounts Gerizim and Ebal?

How were the Gibeonites dealt with?

What special miracles were wrought to help Israel in the battle of Gibeon?

How was the land of Canaan divided to the tribes?

What exhortation did Joshua give the people just before his death?

III. THE GOVERNMENT OF THE JUDGES.—BEGINNING OF IDOLATRY IN ISRAEL.—OTHNIEL, DEBORAH, RUTH.

After the death of Joshua the people continued to prosecute the conquest of the land of Canaan; the tribe of Judah, by Divine appointment, taking the lead. We have many particulars of their conquests, which cannot be here detailed. The following is a striking instance of the *retributive justice of God: Adonibezek, the king of Bezek, fled from before the Israelites, but was overtaken, and treated in a singular and cruel manner; they cut off his thumbs and great toes, and he immediately acknowledged that God had justly requited him, for that he had treated with the same cruelty threescore and ten kings whom he had conquered.

When Joshua and the elders that outlived him were dead, the people soon got connected with the Canaanites, and followed their wicked and *idolatrous customs. For these crimes the Lord chastised them, by giving them up to their enemies, who plundered and distressed them; but when from time to time they cried unto the Lord, He hearkened to them, and raised them up judges, who delivered the people and subdued their enemies.

The first who is mentioned as openly practising idolatry was Micah, of the tribe of Ephraim. He lived at a considerable distance from Shiloh, where the tabernacle was placed, and the worship of God performed; and he made this an excuse for having images in his own house, which he intended to imitate the cherubim on the ark, and pretended to use them in worshipping the true God. But that which is contrary to the commands of God cannot be acceptable in His sight, and will only lead to grosser departures from Him. Micah afterwards persuaded a Levite to come and live with him, and act as a priest; and Micah pleased himself greatly with his own devices; but, after a time, the Danites passing that way, accidentally met with the priest and the images, and being themselves idolatrously disposed, carried them away to a new settlement of theirs, and there maintained the same kind of worship. Micah pursued them, and cried bitterly after his gods, but could obtain no redress. How true it is that they who forsake the living God, follow lying vanities, and forsake their own mercies!

About the same time an act of horrible cruelty was perpetrated by the men of Gibeah, of the tribe of Benjamin. They cruelly used the wife of a Levite who travelled through their city, so as to cause her death. When the Levite sought

the punishment of the offenders, the tribe of Benjamin took their part, and refused to give them up. The Levite then made his appeal to all the tribes of Israel, who joined together against the tribe of Benjamin—a bloody war ensued, and the tribe of Benjamin was almost entirely cut off. These facts, though recorded at the close of the Book of Judges, took place at an earlier period of the history, and serve to shew what would be the state of society if there were no settled government, but every one was left to do as he pleased. Judges xvii.—xxi.

The first oppression that is expressly mentioned was by the king of Mesopotamia; and then the Lord delivered Israel by the hand of Othniel, a valiant man, the nephew and son-in-law of Caleb, who governed the people forty years.

After this, when the people again fell into idolatry and wickedness, the Moabites, Ammonites, and Amalekites, joined against them, and made them *tributary. Ehud, a Benjamite, was raised up to help them. He slew Eglon, the king of Moab, and roused the people to pursue and vanquish their enemies.

Shamgar, another judge, is famous for having slain six hundred Philistines with an ox-goad.

After this, the Israelites in the northern part of the land were oppressed by the Canaanites. At this time, Deborah, the prophetess, judged Israel; and under her direction, Barak, the commander of Israel, gained a great victory over Jabin, king of the Canaanites; and Sisera, the famous general of the Canaanites, was killed in a tent by Jael, a woman of extraordinary courage, who, under an especial influence of holy zeal and patriotism, drove a nail into his temples. This victory was celebrated by Deborah and Barak in a fine poetical song, and all the praise devoutly ascribed to Jehovah, the God of Israel. Judges i.—v.

The most severe oppression with which the Israelites were visited was that of the Midianites, who prevailed against them seven years, and greatly impoverished them, so that they endured all the horrors of famine.

It was most probably during this famine that the circumstances occurred which are related in the Book of Ruth. This little book relates entirely to a private family, but is very interesting and instructive, as it exhibits a pleasing specimen of ancient simplicity, and illustrates the special care of God over those who put their trust in Him. It is also highly important as a link in the *genealogy of the Messiah, and traces in his descent the ful

prophecy. The family of Elimelech, a native of Bethlehem, in the tribe of Judah, was driven by famine to sojourn in the land of Moab. There the two sons of Elimelech married Moabitish women, and both Elimelech and his sons died. Some time after their death, Naomi, the widow of Elimelech, hearing that the Lord had visited his people with plenty, resolved on returning to her own country. Both her daughters in law offered to accompany her. One of them, Orpah, afterwards returned to her own country, but the other, Ruth, having a very steady attachment to her mother in law, and especially having a strong confidence in the God of Israel, persevered in her resolution of casting in her lot with the people of God. She was a humble, virtuous, industrious young woman, and her filial piety and tenderness, as well as her pious confidence, were abundantly requited. She afterwards became the wife of Boaz, the kinsman of Elimelech's family, who, according to the laws of Israel, redeemed the inheritance which had fallen to decay. From this marriage sprung Obed, the father of Jesse, and grandfather of David, king of Israel, from whom, according to the flesh, Christ came. Ruth.

QUESTIONS.

What particular instance of retribution appeared in the conquest of one of the kings of Canaan?

How did the Israelites conduct themselves after the death of Joshua and the elders?

Under what excuse was idolatry first openly practised in Israel?

In what manner did God chastise the people for their idolatry?

Who was the first famous judge or deliverer of Israel?

What particulars have we of a victory over Jabin, a king of the Canaanites?

What family history comes in about the time of the oppression of Israel by the Midianites.

On what account is the history of Ruth chiefly important?

IV. GIDEON, JEPHTHAH, ELI, SAMSON.

A. M. 2750.—B. C. 1245.

When Israel had been long suffering under the oppression of the Midianites, they cried unto the Lord to relieve them. A prophet was sent to reprove them for their ingratitude and idolatry,—an angel also was sent to a man named Gideon, to encourage him to attempt the overthrow of idolatry and the deliverance of Israel. Having a promise that the Lord would certainly be with him, Gideon threw down the altar of Baal, the idol god, and cut down the grove in which he was worshipped, and offered sacrifices to Jehovah the God of Israel. This provoked the men of the place,

who were idolaters, and they called upon Joash to bring forth his son Gideon, that they might put him to death; but he said, Let Baal plead his own cause,—if he were a god he would be able to avenge himself. After this Gideon was directed by the Lord to gather the people together, and go up against Midian. Several remarkable signs were given for his encouragement—first a fleece of wool which he spread was filled with dew, while all the earth around remained dry,—then the fleece was dry, and all the earth around was wet. After this he heard one of the soldiers of Midian relate his dream, that Gideon, the son of Joash was to overturn all the host of Midian. To shew that success was entirely the gift of God, the attack was ordered to be conducted in a very singular manner, only three hundred men were employed, each furnished with a lamp, an earthen pitcher, and a trumpet. The lighted lamp was hid in the pitcher, and the men went, by night, in three companies, to the camp of Midian. All at once, they broke their pitchers, let the light appear, and sounded their trumpets, shouting “The sword of the Lord and of Gideon.” This threw the whole camp into consternation, and a total defeat ensued; the kings and princes of Midian, Oreb and Zeeb, Zebah and Zalmunna, were slain, and great spoil was taken by Israel. The people offered to make Gideon their king. This he declined, but continued to manage their affairs, and greatly promoted the prosperity of the nation. Gideon died in a good old age, after which the people again fell into idolatry; and also discovered great ingratitude and unkindness to the family of their benefactor. A son of Gideon, named Abimelech, having slain all his brethren except one, persuaded the men of Shechem to set him up for their king or governor. This caused great dissensions among the people, and after three years Abimelech was slain, while besieging the city of Thebez.

Of the next judges, Tola and Jair, we know very little, but it is probable their times were the most peaceable and righteous of the *commonwealth of Israel; for what we do read of the history of the Israelites is generally of their sins and provocations, and consequent calamities.

Again the people forsook their God and provoked Him by their idols and wickedness, and the Philistines and Ammonites were permitted to oppress them. And, again, when they sought the Lord, in their distress, He had compassion on them, and raised up for them a deliverer,—*Jephthah*, a man of Gilead. When *Jephthah* prepared to

go up to battle, he made a vow, that if the Lord granted him success, whatever he should first meet on his return, should be *consecrated to the Lord. He obtained a great victory over the Ammonites, and, returning home, met his only daughter; this filled him with grief at the remembrance of his rash vow, which, however, after a respite of two months, was fulfilled. We are not to suppose that she was put to death as a sacrifice, but that she was devoted entirely to the service of God, and to live a single and recluse life. Even this was a great trial, as all the Israelitish women were particularly desirous of having families, in the hope that from them the promised Messiah might spring,—and Jephthah had no other child by whom his name and inheritance might descend. Jephthah died when he had judged Israel six years. After him followed several judges, of whom we know little more than their names. After this Eli was both *high-priest and judge of Israel. While he was judge, the people, on account of their wickedness, were greatly harassed by the Philistines, who oppressed them forty years. During that time, and in the same year, were born two very illustrious individuals—Samson and Samuel. The former was raised up to be the deliverer of Israel from the yoke of the Philistines. Before his birth, an angel appeared to his parents, and told them that he should be a *Nazarite to God from his birth, and also should work great deliverance for Israel. Very early in life Samson discovered an amazing degree of strength and ability, but he was a man of headstrong passions, and though he could strangle a fierce lion as easily as a kid, he was enslaved by his own base and sensual lusts. Having grown to years of maturity, he was bent on marrying a woman of the Philistines. His parents reasoned with him against this step, which the laws of God had expressly forbidden, and which was likely to be in every way injurious to his best interests; but Samson would hear no reason. He turbulently replied “Get her for me, she pleaseth me well.” His marriage, as might be supposed, resulted in much domestic uneasiness; it was, however, overruled by God for good. It led to a quarrel between Samson and the Philistines, which issued in the deliverance of Israel. After Samson had attacked the Philistines in several ways, the men of Judah gave him up, bound, into the hands of his enemies, but he snapt the cords by which he was held, as if they had been tow, and, seizing a jaw bone of an ass, he slew with it a thousand men. After this

he was established as judge in Israel, and continued so, for twenty years. At one time Samson was in Gaza, a city of the Philistines, and his enemies surrounded the city, and shut him up; but he carried away the gates of the city, to the top of a hill before Hebron. But, at length, Samson, thus miraculously endowed, and who had so long been the scourge and terror of the Philistines, was overcome by means of a Philistine woman. Having yielded himself to her seductions, she enticed him to tell her wherein lay his extraordinary strength. He gave her several evasive answers; but, at length, was induced to tell her that his strength was in his hair, which had never been cut. This was part of his vow as a Nazarite, by which he was especially dedicated to the service of God; so, in fact, it was saying, that his strength was derived by power from God alone, conferred for extraordinary purposes, and under particular conditions; and that if his hair should be cut, by which he was distinguished as the consecrated servant of God, his vow would be violated, and the strength of God being withdrawn from him, he would be weak as another man. This wicked woman having possessed herself of his secret, got him shaved in his sleep, and then yielded him up to the Philistines for a great bribe. They easily conquered him, put out his eyes, and imprisoned him at Gaza. Samson stands as a warning to young people to "abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul." The finest talents have been perverted, and the brightest prospects blighted by the indulgence of sinful inclinations, and the snares of evil company.

Samson was imprisoned two years, and his hair began to grow,—perhaps this was a token that he repented of his sins, and that his penitence was accepted; for his miraculous strength, which he had forfeited by his vices, was afterwards restored to him on one remarkable occasion. The lords of the Philistines were delighted at having Samson in their power. They made a great feast, and sacrifice to Dagon their idol God, to whom they attributed Samson's defeat, and sent for him to make sport before them. Samson earnestly prayed that his great strength might return, and that he might be enabled to revenge himself on the enemies of Israel, and the enemies of the true God. His request was granted. He reared the middle pillars of the house where they were assembled, and then, suddenly bowing down under them, was crushed to death, together with all the lords of the Philistines, so

that he slew more at his death than in his life, and more effectually crushed the power of the Philistines. Judges xiii.—xvi.

QUESTIONS.

Who delivered Israel from the hand of the Midianites?

In what manner did he attack them?

What took place after the death of Gideon?

By what people was Israel oppressed when Jephthah was raised up to be their deliverer?

What particular circumstance was connected with his victory?

Was Jephthah's daughter put to death as a sacrifice?

For what was Samson distinguished?

What great feats did he perform?

Was he as much distinguished by moral excellence as by bodily strength?

V. ELI AND SAMUEL.—THE ARK.

A. M. 2848.—B. C. 1156.

Eli was at once * high-priest and judge of Israel. He was a good man, but of too easy and gentle a disposition; his sons, who, by their birth, were entitled to the priesthood, were exceedingly vicious and profane, and though Eli was greatly concerned at their crimes, he did not rebuke them with the firmness and severity that the case required. This improper lenity was very offensive in the sight of God, and most injurious to the young men themselves, for thus they were emboldened and hardened in their transgressions, and by their example the people became worse and worse.

At this time Samuel was born. He was the son of Elkanah, a pious Levite, and Hannah, his wife. Hannah had long been childless, and was ardently desirous of having a son, that she might dedicate him to the Lord. At this time the * tabernacle was at Shiloh, and there the people went to keep the solemn feasts. Once when Hannah went up with her husband, she entered the holy place, and there earnestly prayed that the Lord would grant her request; and solemnly vowed that if the Lord would grant her a son, he should be consecrated to God as a Nazarite from his birth. Eli observed her agitation; at first he thought ill of her, but when she told him that she had been praying in the bitterness of her spirit, he said to her, "Go in peace: and the God of Israel grant thee the petition that thou hast asked of Him." The Lord appeared for Hannah, and gave her a son, to which she gave the name of Samuel, or, *asked of the Lord*. During the infant years of her child, Hannah bestowed the utmost care upon him, and trained him to early

habits of obedience and piety. As soon as he was old enough to be taken from home, Hannah again accompanied her husband to the feast at Shiloh, and they took the child with them, to perform the vow that had been made of dedicating him to the Lord. From that time he was placed under the care of Eli the *high-priest, and *ministered unto the Lord. We do not know what service he was capable of performing, but his early piety and docility were accepted of the Lord, and he grew on, and was in favour with the Lord, and also with men. Meanwhile the sons of Eli grew worse and worse. They transgressed the express laws of God with respect to the sacrifices, and even by force compelled the people, when they brought their offerings, to give up to them that part which was ordered to be burnt before the Lord. They also practised every species of intemperance and abomination. In consequence of their crimes, God denounced very severe judgments against the house of Eli. On one occasion the Lord called to Samuel with an audible voice when he was laid down to sleep. Samuel thought that Eli called him, and went again and again to answer him; but at last Eli perceived that the Lord had spoken to the child, and he bade him reply, "Speak, Lord; for thy servant heareth." Samuel did so; and was charged with an awful message to Eli, that, because his sons had made themselves vile, and he restrained them not, therefore, the priesthood should be cut off from his family, and very severe judgments executed against it. In the morning, Eli urged Samuel to tell him what had been revealed to him. On hearing the sad message, Eli, with pious submission, said, "It is the Lord: let him do what seemeth him good." A like message was sent to Eli by a prophet, which also intimated that both the sons of Eli should be cut off in one day, and that he should live to see the ark in possession of the enemies of God.

The family of Eli stands as a way-mark for parents, that they spare not the exercise of proper authority and needful correction, lest their children should prove transgressors against God, and a reproach and grief to their too indulgent parents; while the early, eminent, and steadfast piety of Samuel, affords a pleasing encouragement to "train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." Samuel is supposed to have been about twelve years old when the Lord first called him. He *continued to prophesy* from that time to his death. During the *life of Eli*, he assisted him in judging Israel: after that he

judged Israel alone until the appointment of a king, and continued afterwards to assist in the administration of affairs ; so that on the whole he judged Israel about eighty years.

The fulfilment of the denunciations against Eli's house did not take place for several years after they were uttered : but though the threatenings of God may seem to delay, they will surely be fulfilled in due season.

The Philistines had for some time been suffered to harass Israel, and Israel went against them, but suffered defeat, and the loss of four thousand men. Instead of humbly praying to God, and deeply repenting those sins which had caused him to give them up to their enemies, the people vainly and presumptuously sent for the ark of God from Shiloh ; flattering themselves that its presence would insure to them deliverance and success. This was a very foolish and sinful step. God had fixed the ark in Shiloh, and it was great presumption to remove it without his express permission : besides, though God had been pleased to make the ark the *symbol of his gracious presence with those who sought Him in his appointed way, its mere presence was never intended to convey any benefit to the careless and disobedient. However, the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, took the ark to the field of battle. When it arrived the Israelites shouted for joy, as if they had already gained a victory, and the Philistines were greatly dismayed ; but, contrary to the expectations of both parties, the Philistines were triumphant and Israel was defeated, the ark was taken, and about thirty thousand Israelites slain, among whom were the two sons of Eli. Eli was now ninety years of age, and very dim sighted, his heart almost broken by the wickedness of his sons, and trembling for the safety of the ark of God, when a messenger from the camp brought the sad tidings. On hearing that the ark was taken, he fell backward and expired. His daughter-in-law, the wife of Phinehas, also expired, after giving to her new-born son the name of Ichabod, or, *the glory is departed*.

But the ark of God, though it afforded no protection to Israel while under the Divine displeasure, was made the instrument of plaguing and confounding their enemies. The Philistines set it up in the temple of Dagon, their god, at Ashdod ; but the image of Dagon fell down before the ark, and was mutilated in such a way, as plainly marked a special and designed interposition. The Philistines then removed it from Ashdod to Gath, and from Gath to Ekron, but, wherever it went, grievous plagues visited the people, and

convinced them that the displeasure of the God of Israel was provoked against them. At last they resolved on sending it home, accompanied by costly offerings; but, to prove whether indeed God would interfere on behalf of the *symbol of his presence, they placed the ark in a cart, and yoked to it two milch cows, whose calves were shut up, and who, in all natural probability, would have refused to quit the spot. But it pleased God to shew his complete dominion over the brute creatures, by causing them to go on quietly in the direct road, until they arrived at Bethshemesh, a city of Israel. There the lords of the Philistines restored the sacred treasure, and offered sacrifices to the God of Israel.

Many strict injunctions had been given to the people to observe the utmost reverence in approaching the ark, and it was especially forbidden to look into it; but the men of Bethshemesh indulged an irreverent curiosity, and many of them were cut off by a plague from the Lord. After this the ark was removed to Kirjath-jearim, and remained there many years.

About twenty years after the defeat of Israel by the Philistines, the people in a remarkable manner humbled themselves, and penitently returned to the Lord, putting away the strange gods, and assembling themselves at Mizpah to ask counsel of the Lord, with fasting and sacrifices. The Philistines took this opportunity of attacking them: but now the Lord appeared for Israel, and discomfited the Philistines by thundering upon them; and Israel pursued them, and smote them. On this occasion Samuel set up a great stone as a memorial of the Lord's goodness to Israel, and called it Ebenezer, or, the stone of help, saying, "Hitherto the Lord hath helped us."

After this, the Philistines no more prevailed against Israel all the days of Samuel, who continued to judge Israel, residing at Ramah, and making a yearly circuit to Bethel, Gilgal, and Mizpeh. As Samuel grew old and infirm, he took his sons to assist him in the government. They walked not in the uprightness of their father, but oppressed the people, and took bribes. This occasioned great dissatisfaction among the people, and led them to desire a king. Samuel remonstrated against this measure as unwise in itself, and especially as it seemed like rejecting the government of God, who had condescended to be himself their King; but they persisted in their request, and at length God directed Samuel to anoint them a king. 1 Sam. i.—viii.

QUESTIONS.

- Who was the judge of Israel when Samuel was born?
 Did he fill any other office besides that of judge?
 Who were the parents of Samuel?
 What particular circumstances were connected with Samuel's birth?
 What was Samuel's early character?
 Was Eli on the whole a good man?
 In what particular did he provoke the Divine displeasure?
 What was threatened in consequence?
 When the Philistines prevailed against Israel, what did Israel do to insure success?
 Did the ark preserve Israel and prevail against their enemies?
 What particulars attended the death of Eli and his sons?
 Did Samuel continue to judge Israel?
 Was the ark ever restored to Israel?
 Were the Israelites on any occasions successful against the Philistines?
 What was the memorial of their victory?
 What led the Israelites to desire a king?

 PERIOD VI.

FROM THE COMMENCEMENT OF MONARCHY IN ISRAEL, TO THE REVOLT OF THE TEN TRIBES.

I. THE REIGN OF SAUL.

A. M. 2909.—B. C. 1005.

THE person whom God commanded Samuel to anoint as king over Israel, was Saul, the son of Kish, (or Cis,) of the tribe of Benjamin. Saul was sent by his father in search of some asses that had strayed, and by the persuasion of his servant, visited Samuel the prophet, with an intention of inquiring after them. But Samuel had been warned of God to expect him, and to entertain him as the appointed king of Israel. Before Saul's departure, Samuel informed him of his high destination, and anointed him to the office. Saul returned to his father's house, but said nothing of what had transpired until the prophet assembled the people together, and presented Saul to them as their king.

Soon afterwards, the men of Jabesh-gilead were oppressed by the Ammonites, and Saul valiantly defended them. This brought him into more general notice and favour among the people, and he was received as their king with every expression of loyal joy. At this time Samuel retreated from

public life, appealing to the people as to the integrity and disinterestedness with which he had discharged his duties, to which they readily assented. Samuel reproved them for their ingratitude against God in desiring a king, yet encouraged them to hope for the Divine mercy and blessing still to continue with them if they were obedient. To confirm his instructions by a sign from heaven, Samuel besought the Lord to send an extraordinary storm of thunder and rain. This was immediately answered, and the people were greatly terrified thereby; but Samuel reminded them of the mercy and faithfulness of God, and promised still to pray for them.

Saul governed well for a time, but he was a man of a rash and self-willed spirit, and did not punctually obey the instructions which God sent him by the prophet Samuel. This was highly displeasing in the sight of God, and finally led to the rejection of Saul from being king.

The Philistines again harassed Israel, and Saul went to Gilgal to oppose them. Samuel directed him to wait at Gilgal seven days, till he should come to sacrifice to the Lord, and implore his blessing on the enterprise. But before the time had quite elapsed, Saul became impatient of the prophet's delay, and presumed himself to offer *burnt-offerings and *sacrifices. He had no sooner done so than Samuel arrived, and severely reproved this act of presumptuous disobedience, and told Saul, that, in consequence of it, his kingdom should not continue.

Some time after this, Jonathan, the son of Saul, made a gallant and successful attack on a garrison of the Philistines. Saul was greatly elated with this victory, and in his eagerness to pursue it to the uttermost, rashly vowed death upon any of the people who should taste food until they had fully avenged themselves on their enemies. Jonathan not being aware of this, refreshed himself with honey. On Saul finding this he would have put Jonathan to death, but the people rescued him.

After this Saul established the kingdom of Israel on every side against the several nations that had from time to time harassed the people.

Many years before, when the Amalekites attacked Israel in the wilderness, the Lord had declared that Amalek should be cut off from being a nation; and now Saul was called upon to fulfil this threatening. His instructions were very explicit, and his success complete; but again he failed in his obedience. The command was, that both the persons

and substance of the Amalekites should be utterly destroyed ; but Saul transgressed in sparing Agag the king, and the best of the spoil. He pretended to excuse this disobedience by saying that he reserved it as an offering to the Lord : but Samuel told him that the Lord would not accept sacrifice in the place of obedience ; and that, because he had rejected the command of the Lord, the Lord had rejected him from being king. Samuel himself executed the decree against Agag, and then returned to his home. He visited Saul no more, but secretly mourned his rejection.

Soon afterwards, Samuel received a command from the Lord to go to Bethlehem, and *anoint one of the sons of Jesse to be king after Saul. Jesse brought in seven sons to Samuel in succession, but neither of these were chosen ; afterwards his youngest son, David, a youth who kept his father's sheep, was called, and Samuel took a horn of oil and anointed him in the presence of his brethren, and from that day forward he gave strong indications of being under the especial influence of the Spirit of God to qualify him for his high destination.

As for Saul, he was greatly troubled at the Divine denunciation against him, and being troubled by his own evil conscience, he fell into great distress and horror of mind. He seems to have had no feelings of penitence, but only those of gloom and despair. He was advised to try the power of music in order to divert his melancholy,—and David, the son of Jesse, who was known to be very skilful in playing the harp, and in the sacred poetry of the Hebrews, was called for to attend the king. His endeavours were for a time successful in soothing the troubled spirit, and he was retained a considerable time at court, but afterwards, it appears, he contentedly returned to his sheepfold.

At this time there was war with the Philistines, and the elder brothers of David being with the army, his father sent him to carry them a present and inquire after their welfare. The armies of Philistia and Israel were encamped over against each other, and the Philistines had a famous *champion, called Goliath, a giant in stature, and of a fierce and warlike spirit, who came out every day and challenged any one of the Israelites to meet him in single combat and so decide the war. Saul had offered great reward to any one who should undertake it,—but no one had dared to accept the challenge. When David heard the bold defiance, his youthful heart bounded at once with patriotism and piety, and he offered, in the strength of the living God, to meet

Goliath, who had thus defied the armies of Israel and the power of Israel's God. David's brothers were too much like those of Joseph—they seem to have envied him his distinction, and spoke to him contemptuously and unkindly. With some difficulty David got himself introduced to Saul, and tendered his services. Saul and many others dissuaded him on account of his youth, but he replied, with great modesty, and yet with holy firmness and courage, that the Lord had strengthened him to conquer a lion and a bear which had attacked his fold, and he doubted not but aid would be afforded him to prevail against this impious Philistine. Saul insisted on his being equipped in his armour, which he tried, but soon declined; then, armed only with a sling, and a few smooth stones, he went forth and thus piously addressed the giant: "Thou comest against me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield; but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of Hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied. This day will the Lord deliver thee into mine hand, and I will smite thee and take thine head from thee, that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel. And all this assembly shall know that the Lord saveth not with sword and spear, for the battle is the Lord's, and He will give you into our hands." David had no sooner said this, than he ran to meet the Philistine, and sent a stone from the sling into his forehead, so that he fell on the earth. David then cut off his head, and returned to Jerusalem, and was presented to the king.

At this time, Jonathan the son of Saul became most affectionately attached to David in a friendship which lasted as long as life; but Saul was envious and jealous of the fame which David had so justly won, and instead of honourably rewarding him, as he had promised, he made several attempts upon his life: this was under the combined influence of his malignant passions, and his mental disorder. Under pretence of honouring David, Saul sent him on the most dangerous enterprises, hoping that he might fall in battle. But God gave him success in whatever he attempted. He also grew exceedingly in the favour of the people, and was at length married to Michal the daughter of Saul.

Still Saul was not to be diverted from his malignant purpose. He told his son and all his servants, that he desired the death of David, and commanded them to accomplish it; but Jonathan pleaded David's cause with his father, and also gave warning to David of his danger: in consequence of this, Saul attempted to kill his own son Jonathan. One time

David's life was preserved by a stratagem of his wife ; who, when the king sent messengers to take him, dressed up a pillow and put into the bed, pretending he was sick, thus deluding the officers, while he had time to escape. But after several attempts to appease Saul's anger, David found it necessary altogether to flee from court, and conceal himself from the rage of his cruel persecutor. The remainder of Saul's reign was occupied in hunting after David, and in wreaking his vengeance on those who afforded him shelter and succour.

David first went to Abimelech the priest at Nob, and obtained bread for himself and his followers ; also the sword of Goliath, which he himself had taken away, and which was laid up there. A servant of Saul, named Doeg, met David there. He was afterwards one of his bitterest enemies ; and through his spiteful and unjust account of the matter, Saul put to death eighty-five priests and their families.

David then fled to Gath, and sought protection from Achish, the king, but being detected and endangered, he feigned madness, and so saved his life. From thence he went to the cave of Adullam, and concealed himself ; there his relations and friends came to him, besides about four hundred men in unsettled circumstances, and he became their captain ; but he could not find any settled place of rest from the rage of his cruel enemy, and he was driven and hunted about like a partridge on the mountains. Among all his own perils, David was concerned, as every dutiful child naturally would be, for the safety of his parents ; he sought protection for them of the king of Moab.

When the priests were slain by order of Saul, Abiathar, the son of the late high priest, escaped to David, bringing with him the *ephod and *breast-plate, the *Urim and *Thummim, by means of which David had the opportunity of consulting the Divine *oracle ; accordingly, in future, we find him frequently referring to it. We have not now the visible oracle, but we have the word of God, which is given as a light to our feet and a lamp to our paths, and if we seek counsel of God by humble prayer in the way of his appointment, He will direct our steps.

David and his little company rendered great service to Israel in particular places which had been attacked by enemies, but in general he was treated with ingratitude and treachery. He rescued the inhabitants of Keilah, a fortified place, from the Philistines ; but they dealt with Saul, and would have given up their benefactor into the hands of his enemy, had not God forewarned him of the snare, and

permitted him to escape. This led David to say, "Fear was on every side : while they took counsel together against me, they devised to take away my life. But I trusted in Thee, O Lord, I said, Thou art my God. My times are in thy hand; deliver me from the hand of mine enemies.—Blessed be the Lord, for He hath shewed me his marvellous kindness in a strong city," &c. Psalm xxxi. 13—21. Indeed, David's numerous troubles and persecutions gave occasion to his composing many of the most beautiful Psalms, and such as are most particularly adapted to afford consolation and encouragement to persons in time of trouble. Those who wish to understand the feelings of mind which David exercised under particular circumstances, or the circumstances which led to the expression of particular feelings, will find it pleasant and profitable to compare the Psalms with the passages of history to which they refer, (as Psalm xxxi. with 1 Samuel xxiii. 1—15. Psalm lii. with 1 Samuel xxii. 9—19. Psalm i. iv. with 1 Samuel xxiv. 19—29.) Having escaped from Keilah, David and his men abode in the strongholds, and woods of Ziph and Maon, where his faithful friend Jonathan secretly visited him, and encouraged him to put his trust in God. The Ziphites, being aware of David's retreat, offered to deliver him up, and Saul in consequence came and surrounded the place, but he was suddenly called away by tidings of the Philistines having invaded the land. On Saul's return, he again pursued David, and David had an opportunity of taking away his life, had he been so disposed; for he found him asleep in a cave, unattended. But with true generosity and piety he forbore to injure his persecutor when he had him in his power; leaving it to God to bring his own purposes to pass in due time, he cut off a piece of Saul's robe, to shew what he might have done. Saul then said he was convinced of David's innocence, and that he would certainly obtain the kingdom.

About this time the prophet Samuel died, greatly lamented by all the people.

David was now in the wilderness of Paran, where dwelt a rich, but churlish man, named Nabal. David and his men had been very serviceable in protecting Nabal's property; and being faint and weary, they requested some provisions of Nabal, who held a sheep-shearing feast. He not only refused their request, but treated them with great insolence; which David was preparing to revenge, but Abigail, the wife of Nabal, promptly and discreetly interfered, and turned away the displeasure of David. Shortly after, Nabal died in

a fit of drunkenness, and Abigail afterwards became the wife of David.

Again Saul pursued David in the woods of Ziph, and again David had an opportunity of at once ridding himself of his cruel enemy, but he forbore, and only took a cruse and spear that stood beside him. Truly happy and honourable is he who can return good for evil, and commit his cause to Him who judgeth righteously. Saul seemed much softened by David's kindness, and promised to do him no more harm; but David had no confidence in promises that had been so often broken; he again fled for refuge to the Philistines, and dwelt in the city of Ziklag, with his family and followers, and Saul finding that David had fled there, ceased to pursue him.

While David dwelt in Ziklag, war broke out between the Philistines and Israel; and Achish, the king who protected David, having a high opinion of his valour, proposed sending him to fight against Israel. This placed David in very trying circumstances; but the lords of the Philistines disapproved of employing him, and so he happily escaped from his embarrassment.

As the armies of Philistia and Israel drew near to each other, and a decisive battle was expected, Saul was greatly perplexed and discouraged with the prospect. Troubled by his own evil conscience, and forsaken of God, he went to consult a witch, and desired her to call up the prophet Samuel, that he might inquire of him as to the event of the battle. Whether this wicked woman only intended to deceive Saul, or whether she really expected to see the departed prophet, does not appear; but it pleased God, for wise reasons, to permit an apparition of Samuel to visit Saul, and tell him that he would now lose his throne and his life, for his transgression in the matter of Amalek. This is a mysterious circumstance, but it gives no ground whatever for a superstitious belief in either witches or apparitions. Let us fear God and maintain a good conscience, and then we have nothing to be afraid of. God never forsakes any but those who forsake Him; and while we pray to Him, read his holy word, and obey his commands, we shall never want a counsellor or a friend. King Saul never thought of consulting the witch till he had left off serving God; and then his evil conscience was more torment to him than the most fearful apparition that could be imagined.

The next day Saul went to the army, and joined battle with the Philistines. The Philistines prevailed against Israel. Saul's three sons were slain, and himself wounded; and in

sullen despair he fell on his own sword and died. The Philistines found the bodies of Saul and his sons, and vilely treated them; but the men of Jabesh Giliad, hearing of this, obtained the bodies by night, and buried them. 1 Samuel xii.—xxxi. 1 Chron. x.

QUESTIONS.

- What was the name and tribe of the first king of Israel?
- By whom, and in what manner, was he set apart to be king?
- How did Samuel take leave of the people?
- What miracle attested his instructions?
- Did Saul govern well?
- What was his transgression when going to battle against the Philistines?
- Wherein did he transgress in the matter of the Amalekites?
- What was Saul's state of mind?
- What expedient was resorted to, to soothe his mind?
- How were the Philistines defeated in the reign of Saul?
- How did Saul act towards David?
- What became of Saul at last?

II. THE REIGN OF DAVID.

A. M. 2949.—B. C. 1055.

On hearing of the death of Saul and his sons, David was deeply affected, and gave vent to his feelings of loyalty, patriotism, and friendship, in a beautiful poetical elegy, or lamentation, over Saul and Jonathan.

David now, by divine direction, went to Hebron, where the tribe of Judah assembled and elected him king; but Abner, the general of Saul's army, and all the other tribes of Israel, endeavoured to establish Ishbosheth, the remaining son of Saul. He reigned in Israel for two years, David offering him no molestation; but at the end of that time, Abner, the general, brought an army against David, who was then obliged to defend himself, though he did it very reluctantly, having sworn to Saul that he would not cut off his seed. A *civil war was carried on for seven years and a half, the army of Ishbosheth being commanded by Abner, and those of David by Joab, his sister's son. During this war, the interests of David gradually gained ground, and those of Ishbosheth declined. At length, Ishbosheth and Abner had a quarrel, and Abner came to offer to take part with David: as he went forth from this audience he was met by Joab, who treacherously slew him, in revenge for the death of his brother Asahel, whom Abner some years before had slain in self-defence. David *sincerely regretted* the death of Abner, who was a brave man;

and he was exceedingly indignant at the treacherous and revengeful conduct of Joab. He expressed his full persuasion that the Lord would reward the evil-doer according to his wickedness. Ishbosheth and the Israelites were much discouraged by the death of Abner, and general discontent prevailed among the people. At length, two of the captains murdered Ishbosheth, and brought his head to David, expecting a great reward; but David punished with death the perpetrators of this cruel deed, and buried the head of Ishbosheth in Abner's sepulchre. Thus the whole family of Saul was cut off, excepting Mephibosheth, a son of Jonathan, who was lamed by a fall when his nurse fled with him at hearing the tidings of the death of Saul and Jonathan. David generously took this young prince under his especial protection, gave him all the family estates of Saul, and appointed him a place at his own table.

When Ishbosheth was dead, all the tribes who had hitherto held back, came and offered their allegiance to David, and he became king over all Israel.

David's first concern was to remove the ark of God, which had been sadly neglected in the time of Saul,—to which neglect David justly attributed the calamities of the late reign. His first military exploit was the conquest of Jerusalem, which had hitherto been maintained by the Jebusites. It was afterwards called the City of David; and Mount Zion, a strong part of it, was fixed on for the permanent abode of the ark; but the bringing it up was not immediately accomplished.

On David's accession to the throne, Hiram, king of Tyre, sent messages of congratulation to him. He also sent him skilful workmen to build a palace for him at Jerusalem and much friendly intercourse subsisted between them.

Early in David's reign the Philistines invaded the land of Israel; but David asked counsel of the Lord, and was directed to go up against them, and miraculously assisted in subduing them.

David then prepared to bring up the ark from the house of Abinadab. It was placed in a new cart, which Uzzah and Ahio, the sons of Abinadab, drove, and David and the people attended with all kinds of music. As they went, Uzzah put forth his hand and took hold of the ark, which none but the priests might lawfully touch; and God smote him there for his error, and there he died, by the ark of God. This awful breach struck terror into the mind of the king; he feared to proceed with the ark to Jerusalem, and left it in the house of Obed-edom, and the Lord signally blessed

the house of Obed-edom, for the ark's sake. This encouraged David again to proceed, in bringing the ark to his own city. He therefore prepared a place for it, and appointed the Levites to bring it up with great reverence and order. David and his people joined the procesion, and received the sacred treasure into Jerusalem, with holy feasting, joy, and thanksgiving.

When the enemies of David were subdued round about him, and he firmly established on the throne, he wished to shew the ark still further honour in building for its reception a most magnificent temple. He mentioned his design to the prophet Nathan, who at first encouraged it, but afterwards was commanded by the Lord to say to David that though his design was accepted of the Lord, the temple should not be built by him who had had so much to do with war, but by his son, whose reign should be remarkably peaceful.

He was also promised that his family should be established on the throne of Israel. These promises have also a more extensive and important reference to the Messiah and his kingdom. David humbly and gratefully adored the Divine mercy and faithfulness manifested towards him; and though, in obedience to the command of God, he did not begin building the house, during the whole of his long reign he was employed in collecting materials and making preparations for its being accomplished by his son.

For several years David's reign was most prosperous and happy; but, at length, he fell into awful transgression, and was, in consequence, visited with severe calamities, especially in his own family. Joab and the army of Israel were engaged in war with the Ammonites. Among them was Uriah, one of David's valiant officers. During his absence, David saw his wife Bathsheba, and suffered himself to be captivated with her beauty, and to seduce her from her fidelity to her husband. Nor did the crime stop here; he treacherously procured the death of Uriah, by directing Joab to place him in a situation of great danger, and then desert him, that he might be slain, and his death ascribed to the common chance of war. Soon after this, David married Bathsheba, and she bare him a son. What a lesson of humility, watchfulness, and caution, does this sad story teach us! If such a man as David thus fell by temptation, let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall.

David's conduct was highly offensive in the sight of God; but his own conscience seemed for a long time insensible to the greatness of his crime. At length the prophet Nathan

was sent to reprove him. This he did by a very ingenious *parable, or fiction, representing, that a rich man being visited by a stranger, took for his entertainment the only lamb of a poor man, sparing his own numerous flocks and herds. David at once exclaimed against such oppression and cruelty, and declared that the person who had been guilty of it should be put to death. Nathan then turned upon the royal culprit, and said, "Thou art the man!" He reminded David of the great mercies God had bestowed upon him, and promised to him and his family, by which his crime was greatly aggravated. He was further told that severe judgments should visit his house, and of such a peculiar kind that he should read his sin in his punishment. David was brought into deep and unfeigned penitence, of which the fifty-first Psalm was the expression. The prophet encouraged him with an assurance of the divine forgiveness, but told him that the child of Bathsheba should die. It immediately fell sick, according to the prophet's word. While it lived, David pleaded hard for its recovery; but as soon as it was dead, he resigned himself in humble submission to the will of God, and the expression of his just displeasure; and consoled himself with the hope of meeting his child in a better world. While this affecting story teaches us to guard against sin, it is also replete with encouragement to the greatest sinners, to hope for mercy and pardon, on sincere repentance and faith in the appointed way of mercy. "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, for he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon."

Sometime after this, Bathsheba bore David another son, who was called Solomon, or *peaceable*. The prophet Nathan was sent to intimate that this child should inherit the throne of Israel, and to give him the additional name of Jedidiah, or *the beloved of the Lord*.

After this, David's family history is one continued scene of grief and vexations. Ammon, one of David's sons, conceived a violent and a sinful passion for his half-sister, Tamar, and acted basely towards her. Absalom, Tamar's own brother, entertained a bitter hatred against Ammon for this transaction, and only waited an opportunity of revenging it. After two years, he invited all his brethren to a feast, and, in the height of the mirth and festivity, caused Ammon to be slain. Then Absalom fled from his father's just displeasure, and came no more into his presence for several years. At length David forgave Absalom, and received him into favour.

Absalom was a fine young man, greatly admired for his personal beauty, and had been treated with too much indulgence by his affectionate father. His heart was odious as his person was admirable. He abused his father's kindness, and became a traitor and rebel. For a considerable time he secretly ingratiated himself with the people, and seduced their hearts from David. At length, under the base pretext of fulfilling a religious vow, he went to Hebron, and got himself proclaimed king. The conspiracy was very strong throughout the land, and David and his friends were forced to flee from Jerusalem. Ahithophel, who had been David's chief counsellor and intimate friend, and who had professed to be very religious, treacherously went over to Absalom's interest. This wounded David's spirit exceedingly. However, he bore this and all his trials with eminent piety and resignation; and, instead of resenting the many injuries and insults he received, committed his cause to the Lord, and regarded all his afflictions as just chastisements coming from the hand of God. Hushai, a steady friend of David, who would have accompanied him in his retreat, was sent back, professedly to join himself to Absalom, in order to share his counsels and give notice of his movements, and, by his means, the counsel of Ahithophel was defeated. That wicked man was so enraged at the preference given to the counsels of another, that he went and hanged himself. Shortly after a decisive battle took place in the wood of Ephraim. Absalom's army was commanded by Amasa, and that of David by Joab, together with Abishai, and Ittai. David would have gone himself to the field of battle, but the people dissuaded him. He therefore earnestly entreated and charged his captains to deal gently with the young man Absalom, for his sake. There was great slaughter among the Israelites, (those who followed Absalom, for the men of Judah were distinguished as David's steady friends.) As Absalom fled on a mule, he was caught by his fine hair in the branches of a tree, and the mule passing from under him, left him hanging. There he was found by David's servants, and, notwithstanding David's parental charge, Joab came up and slew him; for he saw that if Absalom's life were preserved, there would be continual danger of future insurrections. Thus victory was secured, and tranquillity restored; yet David most pathetically bewailed the loss of his disobedient and rebellious son: "O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!"

Some time after this, the people in general became jealous of the favour shewn by David to his own tribe of Judah; and a revolt took place, headed by Sheba, of the tribe of Benjamin; but it was soon suppressed, and Sheba given up to justice. David was also tried by a war with the Philistines, but God gave him victory over them. They were defeated in four engagements, and finally subdued. This was the last assault of his enemies, and he gave thanks, in an inspired Psalm, to God who had given him rest from his enemies round about. But after this, David fell into a great transgression. In a spirit of vain glory and presumption, he commanded the people to be numbered, and persisted in his purpose in spite of all remonstrance. This conduct was highly offensive to the Lord, who sent the prophet Gad to reprove David. Indeed David's heart already smote him for what he had done, and he earnestly besought pardon of the Lord. But it was necessary that this offence, and other national sins, should be punished, and the prophet was directed to offer to David's choice three severe visitations, either even years' famine, or three months' flight in war; or three days' pestilence. David wisely accepted the latter, as desiring to fall immediately into the hands of the Lord, whose great mercies he had often experienced. Accordingly, a dreadful pestilence visited the people, and about seventy thousand died. The angel of the Lord who inflicted this destruction, appeared visibly, having a drawn sword stretched over Jerusalem. David and the elders of Israel, beholding this awful sight, fell prostrate before the Lord in deep lamentation and humility; and at the earnest intercession of David, the hand of the destroying angel was stayed. This took place over the threshing-floor of Araunah the Jebusite, which David bought, and built there an altar, and offered sacrifices; and the *burnt offering was consumed by fire from heaven, in token of reconciliation and acceptance.

David had yet two important concerns to attend to, before the close of his reign, which was now drawing on—to complete his preparation for building the temple, and to secure the succession of Solomon to the throne. Having himself collected together an immense quantity of materials for the building, he invited like contributions from the nobles and people, the whole of which he solemnly and joyfully consecrated to the Lord, grateful for his mercy in bestowing, and his condescension in accepting, these gifts; and having reminded Solomon that God had appointed him to the honour of building this house to his name, encouraged him to

proceed with the work, in pious reliance on the blessing of God. Though God had appointed Solomon to succeed his father on the throne, Adonijah, the fourth son of David, entertained some hopes of getting himself established, and raised a secret faction with this view. But David being informed of these proceedings, caused Solomon to be immediately anointed and proclaimed.

As death approached, David repeated his earnest exhortations to Solomon to be faithful and obedient to the God of his fathers. He acknowledged, with humble gratitude, the mercies and faithfulness of God to him, and expressed his cheerful hope and holy confidence in the covenant on which he had long relied. He died at about seventy years of age, after having reigned over Israel forty years, and was distinguished by the honourable appellation of *the man after God's own heart*. This applies chiefly to his government, in which he was always obedient to the Divine commandments. His personal character was marked with grievous imperfections, but he was uniformly sincere at heart; and eminent also for deep penitence, holy confidence, and ardent delight in the service of God. 2 Samuel ii.—xxiv. 1 Kings i. ii. 11. 1 Chron. xi.—xxix.

QUESTIONS.

Who succeeded Saul on the throne of Israel?

How was David appointed?

Was he accepted at once by all the tribes?

Why was Jerusalem called the City of David?

What was David's first concern when he was established in the kingdom?

What calamity occurred when the ark was removed from Kirjath Jearim?

Was it ever brought to Zion?

What did David design that he was not permitted to accomplish?

What interrupted the prosperity of David's reign?

What became of David's son, Ammon?

How did Absalom act afterwards?

Did he succeed in usurping his father's throne?

What offence did David commit in the latter part of his reign?

How was it punished?

What were the last acts of David's reign?

What was the state of his mind in prospect of death?

What honourable character did he bear?

Did this belong chiefly to his personal character, or to his government?

III. THE REIGN OF SOLOMON.

A. M. 2989.—B. C. 1015.

On the death of his father, Solomon succeeded to the throne, and was peaceably and prosperously established in it. Soon after his accession he went up to sacrifice to the Lord in Gibeon, where the tabernacle then abode, though the ark was in Jerusalem: while there, the Lord appeared to him by night, and offered to bestow upon him whatsoever he should desire. Solomon humbly desired to be endued with wisdom and understanding for the discharge of his arduous and important duties. There is no greater proof of wisdom than a deep consciousness of our need of it, and an earnest desire to obtain it for practical purposes, that we may know what is our duty, and how we ought to discharge it. Solomon's request was so acceptable in the sight of God, that He not only endued him with what he had asked in a degree above all other men, but also bestowed on him in addition those things that he had not asked, riches, and honour, and length of days.

Solomon had no sooner returned to Jerusalem, than a case was presented, which called into exercise and display the extraordinary wisdom with which he was endowed. Two women, residing in one house, had each an infant of the same age; one of the infants died, and each mother maintained that hers was the living infant. There were no witnesses to prove the fact. The young king wisely tried the tenderness of a true mother's feelings, by directing that the living child should be divided, and half given to each. The pretended mother was willing to agree to this, but the true mother cried out that the child's life should be preserved, even though it was to be given to her rival. On this, the king immediately pronounced that she was the true mother; and his own fame was greatly extended for the wisdom of the decision.

Soon after this, Adonijah afresh discovered a disposition to aspire to the throne; and Joab and Abiathar were found concerned in promoting the design. Solomon had readily forgiven Adonijah for the attempt made in his father's lifetime, and promised that if he conducted himself well, no injury should ensue to him. But this new attempt demanded vigorous resistance, and Adonijah and Joab were sentenced to death, and Abiathar degraded from his priesthood. Thus was Joab requited for having, in more than one instance, shed innocent blood. The righteous vengeance of God against

proceed with the work, in pious reliance on the blessing of God. Though God had appointed Solomon to succeed his father on the throne, Adonijah, the fourth son of David, entertained some hopes of getting himself established, and raised a secret faction with this view. But David, informed of these proceedings, caused Solomon to be immediately anointed and proclaimed.

As death approached, David repeated his earnest exhortations to Solomon to be faithful and obedient to the Lord his fathers. He acknowledged, with humble gratitude, the mercies and faithfulness of God to him, and expressed cheerful hope and holy confidence in the covenant which he had long relied on. He died at about seventy years of age, after having reigned over Israel forty years, and was distinguished by the honourable appellation of *the man after his own heart*. This applies chiefly to his government, in which he was always obedient to the Divine commandments; his personal character was marked with grievous imperfections, but he was uniformly sincere at heart; and eminent for deep penitence, holy confidence, and ardent delight in the service of God. 2 Samuel ii.—xxiv. 1 Kings ii.—iii. 1 Chron. xi.—xxix.

QUESTIONS.

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- How was David appointed?
- Was he accepted at once by all the tribes?
- Why was Jerusalem called the City of David?
- What was David's first concern when he was established in his kingdom?
- What calamity occurred when the ark was removed from Gibeon?
- Was it ever brought to Zion?
- What did David design that he was not permitted to accomplish?
- What interrupted the prosperity of David's reign?
- What became of David's son, Amnon?
- How did Absalom act afterwards?
- Did he succeed in usurping his father's throne?
- What offence did David commit in the latter part of his reign?
- How was it punished?
- What were the last acts of David's reign?
- What was the state of his mind in prospect of death?
- What honourable character did he bear?
- Did this belong chiefly to his personal character, or to his government?

sin, though slow, is *sure*; and of all crimes, murder, in particular, is generally reckoned for, even in this world.

Huran or Hiram, king of Tyre, had always maintained friendly intercourse with David. The like friendship was maintained with Solomon. Hiram agreed to furnish cedar and other choice woods for the building of the temple; and in return was to receive wheat and oil, (the produce of the land of Canaan), for the supply of his household. Solomon also obtained from Tyre skilful workmen in silver and gold, and employed his own people in hewing the cedars, preparing the stones, and conveying them to Jerusalem. These preparations occupied between three and four years, and the erection of the temple seven more. The temple was erected on Mount Moriah, where Abraham had offered Isaac, and where the angel of the Lord appeared to David over the threshing-floor of Araunah the Jebusite. It was a most magnificent and splendid edifice. The gold and silver only amounted to upwards of eight thousand millions. It was built after the form of the *tabernacle, but on a much larger scale. When complete, the ark was removed by the priests, and placed in the temple, which was consecrated in the most solemn manner. The sacrifices offered consisted of 22,000 oxen, and 120,000 sheep. Solomon himself led the devotions of the people, in a prayer the most fervent and solemn. Far from being lifted up in pride at the great work he had accomplished, he prostrated himself in the very dust, in the presence of his Creator, and was filled with amazement that God should condescend to notice the works and worship of creatures so mean, and of sinners so vile; but encouraged by the Divine goodness, he fervently implored that there, in all ages, and under all circumstances, God would be pleased to meet his people, and to bless them according to their need. Solomon's prayer was heard, and amidst the praises of the assembled people, the God of Israel took possession of his ark. Fire from heaven descended to consume the sacrifices, and the whole house was filled with visible glory. This temple was in all after ages of the Jewish church the place where sacrifices were offered, and where all the people met at the great sacred festivals three times a-year.

Besides this stately temple for the worship of God, Solomon built himself several magnificent dwellings, both in Jerusalem and Lebanon. It is supposed that the removal of Solomon's queen, an Egyptian princess, to the palace that *he had built for her*, was the occasion of his composition of the *Canticles*, or Solomon's Song, which is also co

to have a further and typical reference to the displays of Christ's love to the church.

During the early part of Solomon's reign, the nation of Israel was raised to its highest prosperity and glory. He had reigned more than twenty years, when the Lord again appeared to him by night, promising to fulfil the prayers that Solomon had offered at the dedication of the temple, and all the prayers that, in all generations, should be offered there in sincerity. The Lord also promised to establish the house of David on the Jewish throne, and continually to bless the people of Israel, provided they should remain steadfast in the worship of the true God, but at the same time threatening awful desolations, both on the people and the temple, if Israel should fall into idolatry.

The fame of Solomon's wisdom, prosperity, and piety, was very widely extended. It is probable that at this period, he had composed the book of Proverbs, which contains the most judicious and wholesome maxims for the government of the heart and conduct, in every circumstance of human life. The queen of Sheba, a country far remote from the land of Israel, having heard the report of Solomon's greatness and wisdom, came a long journey to satisfy herself with beholding the glory of the king of Israel, and deriving instruction from his conversation. Much as she expected, she confessed that the reality far exceeded all she had heard or imagined. Our Lord, in his discourse with the Jews, many ages afterwards, referred to this circumstance, and said that the queen of Sheba (or of the south) was a reproach to those who neglected his heavenly instructions; "for," said he, "she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and a greater than Solomon is here."

But the whole of Solomon's reign was not equally glorious. In his latter years he took many wives and concubines, most of whom were idolaters, and thus his heart was ensnared and enslaved in sensuality and idolatry. How very imperfect are the best of men! and what need is there to be constantly on one's guard against those fleshly lusts which war against the soul, and tarnish the lustre of the brightest reputation! In consequence of these transgressions, the Lord declared to Solomon that the chief part of the kingdom should be rent, not from himself, but from his son, and given to his servant. His latter years were also embittered by several adversaries, whom the Lord permitted to chastise his backslidings. It is generally thought that the book of

Ecclesiastes was written by Solomon in the close of life; as an expression of his repentance, and as a lasting testimony of his decided judgment of the vanity of all worldly possessions, pursuits and pleasures, and of the infinite value and excellency of true religion. "This is the conclusion of the whole matter, Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man; for God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thought, whether it be good, or whether it be evil." Eccles. xii. 13, 14.

Solomon reigned forty years over Israel, and was succeeded by his son Rehoboam. 1 Kings ii.—xi. 2 Chron. i.—ix.

QUESTIONS.

What was the first remarkable act of Solomon's reign?

What particular favour was shewn him by the Lord?

Was his choice approved in the sight of God?

In what remarkable instance was his extraordinary wisdom displayed?

Did he prosecute his father's great design of building the temple?

In what way did Hiram, king of Tyre, assist in prosecuting the design?

What particular services attended the consecration of the temple?

Did any expression of divine acceptance attend the services of that day?

By whom was Solomon visited on account of the fame of his wisdom and greatness?

Did Solomon's glory continue untarnished to the last?

By what means was he drawn aside?

Is there any evidence that he was brought to repentance?

PERIOD VII.

FROM THE DIVISION OF THE TRIBES TO THE BABYLONISH CAPTIVITY.

THE HISTORY OF JUDAH.

I. REHOBAM.

A. M. 3029.—B. C. 975.

AFTER the defection of Solomon, it had been foretold that his servant Jeroboam, should rend the kingdom from his son. In consequence of this prediction Solomon sought to kill Jeroboam, but he fled for safety into Egypt. On the death of Solomon, Jeroboam returned, and was employed by the ten

tribes (that is excepting Benjamin and Judah) to petition the king for some redress of their grievances and heavy burdens. Rehoboam first consulted the counsellors of his late father, who advised him to meet their application with consideration and gentleness. But the younger men, to whom he foolishly hearkened, advised him rather to increase the burdens of which they complained. This so provoked the people that they revolted from him; that is, they refused to obey his government, and determined to form themselves into a separate nation. The ten tribes, accordingly, made Jeroboam their king; and only Judah, Benjamin, and the Levites, adhered to the house of David. They were henceforth called the kingdom of Judah, and the kingdom of Israel. Every one of the kings of Israel was wicked, and idolatrous, but most of the kings of Judah professed to worship the true God.

Rehoboam was preparing an army to fight against the house of Israel, and recover his kingdom; but he was forbidden to do so by the prophet Shemaiah, who told him that it was according to the threatening of God for the sin of Solomon. After the division of the tribes, Rehoboam conducted himself wisely, and the people in general adhered to the worship of the true God; but afterwards, they degenerated into idolatry and vice; and then the Egyptians were permitted to invade and harass them. The prophet Shemaiah reproved them for their sins; on which they repented, and humbled themselves, and deliverance was afforded them, though they were chastised by being spoiled of many of their treasures. During the whole reign of Rehoboam, which lasted seventeen years, there was war between Judah and Israel. His character on the whole is said to have been evil, because he prepared not his heart to seek the Lord. Those who seek the Lord with all their heart, will discharge the duties of life with propriety, and find favour both with God and man. 1 Kings, xii, xiv. 21—31. 2 Chron. x.—xii,

QUESTIONS.

- Who succeeded Solomon on the throne of Israel?
- In what manner did he act in the beginning of his reign?
- What resulted from Rehoboam's arbitrary conduct?
- By whom was the separation of the revolting tribes conducted?
- By what names were the two kingdoms afterwards distinguished?
- Did Rehoboam attempt to reduce the revolted by force of arms?
- How did Rehoboam govern afterwards?
- What was his general character?

II. ABIJAH.

A. M. 3046.—B. C. 958.

Abijah, (or Abijam) the son of Rehoboam, succeeded his father. He reigned in Judah three years, during which time there was war with Jeroboam, who still reigned in Israel. Abijah's character was not good; he walked in the sins of his father. Great mercy, however, was shewn him for the sake of David, his pious forefather, and on one occasion, when he and his people resisted Jeroboam, their cause being good, and their dependence placed on God, He was pleased to appear for them, and give them victory; this is the only particular recorded of Abijah's reign. 1 Kings xvi. 8. 2 Chron. xiii.

QUESTIONS.

Who succeeded Rehoboam?

Have we any particulars of his reign?

III. ASA.

A. M. 3049.—B. C. 955.

Asa was one of the most pious and prosperous kings of Judah. He did much towards the extirpation of idolatry, and the suppression of vice. So impartial was he in the work of reformation, that he even degraded his own mother from her rank as queen on account of her idolatry.

During this reign the Ethiopians made an attack on Judah; but Asa went to the battle, declaring his confidence in God, and his resignation of the issue to his disposal, and the Lord was pleased to appear for his people. The Ethiopians were defeated, and Judah obtained much spoil.

After this, Asa was encouraged by the prophet Azariah, to carry the work of reformation still farther, and he, with all the people, entered into a solemn covenant with God against idolatry. From this time Judah enjoyed a long period of peace and prosperity.

But the best of men are still far from perfection, and Asa, though he never departed from the service of God, on more than one occasion acted inconsistently. Baasha, king of Israel, made war against Asa; and instead of placing his pious dependence on God alone, as he had done so honourably and successfully on former occasions, he purchased the aid of Benhadad, king of Syria, against Baasha. For this he was reprov'd by the prophet Hanani. Asa discovered an improper spirit under this reproof; he put the *seer in

prison, and he also, in some respects, acted oppressively towards the people. In the thirty-ninth year of his reign, Asa was afflicted with a disease in his feet, under which he farther transgressed by relying on the aid of the physicians rather than of God. Asa reigned forty-one years, and died greatly and honourably lamented. 1 Kings xv. 9—24; 2 Chron. xiv.—xvi.

QUESTIONS.

- Who was the next king of Judah?
- What was his character?
- Did he in any instance act inconsistently?

IV. JEHOSEPHAT.

A. M. 3000.—B. C. 914.

Jehoshaphat was one of the best kings of Judah; his reign was long and prosperous. He carried on the reformation his father had begun. He sent forth the priests and Levites to teach the laws of God to the people, and enforced on the judges of the land uprightness and impartiality. Many nations became tributary to Judah; and, on the whole, the national prosperity was very great during this reign. Jehoshaphat unwisely made peace with Israel, and entered into alliance with Ahab and with Ahaziah, two of its wicked kings, which seems to have been the only blot on this reign. The seer Jehu strikingly reprov'd this conduct, saying, "Shouldest thou help the ungodly, and love them that hate the Lord? therefore is wrath gone out against thee from the Lord." Those who fear God ought to keep at the greatest possible distance from the society of the ungodly: there is great danger of being ensnared by their corrupt example, or of being involved in the calamities which result from their crimes. When Jehoshaphat went down to battle with Ahab, he got mistaken for him, and had nearly lost his life in consequence.

The next event that signalized the reign of Jehoshaphat, was a remarkable defeat of the Moabites and Ammonites, who went up with a very great army to invade the land of Judah. The pious king immediately proclaimed a fast, and set himself and his people to ask counsel of the Lord, throwing themselves entirely on his mercy and power; and pleading his past deliverances, and the promises of mercy connected with the faithful worship of the temple. An answer of mercy was sent by Jahaziel, a Levite, assuring the king and people that

the Lord would take the battle into his own hands, and work for his people a complete deliverance. Accordingly, on the following day, while the people were singing praises unto the Lord, He set ambushments against their enemies, and spread among them such terror and confusion that one helped to destroy another, and nothing remained for the people of Judah but to clear away the immense spoil. After this, Jehoshaphat unwisely joined himself to Ahaziah, king of Israel, for the purposes of traffic, but the displeasure of the Lord rested on the alliance, and the enterprize proved unsuccessful. About this time, Jehoram, the son of Jehoshaphat, was joined with his father in the government of Judah.

Towards the close of Jehoshaphat's reign, he went up with his army to join the kings of Israel and of Edom, against Moab. The allied army was distressed for want of water, and the idolatrous king of Israel gave way to gloom and despondency, and said they were only brought together to perish. But the pious king Jehoshaphat sought counsel of the Lord at the mouth of the prophet Elisha, who encouraged the expedition, and promised success; and a miraculous supply of water was afforded them, and complete victory over their enemies. (see p. 130.) This honourable reign was extended through a period of twenty-five years. 1 Kings xxii. 2 Kings iii. 2 Chron. xvii—xxi. 1.

QUESTIONS.

Who succeeded Asa?

What distinguished Jehoshaphat's reign?

Into what evil did he fall?

What great deliverance was effected in this reign?

Had this king any intercourse with the prophet Elisha?

V. JEHORAM.

A. M. 3115.—B. C. 889.

Jehoram, the son of Jehoshaphat, who succeeded him on the throne, reigned wickedly. The sacred historian in a great measure accounts for this by saying he had to wife the daughter of Ahab, the wicked king of Israel. One of the most instructive lessons taught by this part of sacred history, is the danger of evil company in general, and especially in the marriage relation. The character of the wife and mother is of vast importance to those connected with her,—nor less so that of the husband and father. This wicked king was no sooner established on the throne, than he slew his six

brethren, beside several of the princes of Israel. He also established idolatry, and the vices attendant upon it. While thus pursuing his career of wickedness, he received a written intimation from the prophet Elijah of the Divine judgments that should visit himself and family on account of his crimes, and particularly the manner of his death; but this warning had no effect in rousing him to repentance.

During this reign, the Edomites revolted from Judah; and the Philistines and Arabians were stirred up against it on account of the wickedness of its king. They plundered the king's substance, and carried away his wives and children, leaving only the youngest.

Not long after this the king died of a dreadful complaint in the bowels, as the prophet Elijah had foretold. He died unregretted, and was buried without the accustomed honours. He reigned about eight years with his father, and three or four after his death. 2 Kings viii. 16—24. 2 Chron. xxi.

QUESTIONS.

Who succeeded Jehoshaphat?

What was his character?

Of what act of cruelty was he guilty in the early part of his reign?

Did he receive any particular warning against his crimes?

Was the manner of his death correctly foretold?

VI. AHAZIAH.

A. M. 3119.—B. C. 885.

Jehoram was succeeded by his youngest son Ahaziah, (or Jehoahaz), the elder sons having all been slain. His reign was short and wicked. Most affecting is the account of his career. "Forty and two years old was he when he began to reign, and he reigned one year in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Athaliah, the daughter of Omri. He also walked in the ways of the house of Ahab, *for his mother was his counsellor to do wickedly! wherefore he did evil in the sight of the Lord, like the house of Ahab, for they were his counsellors after the death of his father, to his destruction.*" God had decreed the total destruction of Ahab's wicked house. The fulfilment was now hastening on, and Ahaziah involved himself in it by joining Jehoram in the war against Syria.

Jehoram, king of Israel, was at Jezreel wounded by the Syrians, and Ahaziah was visiting him there. Jehu, the appointed instrument of vengeance on Ahab's house, came to Jezreel; on hearing of his approach, the two kings came

forth to meet him, and were both slain. 2 Kings viii. 25—29. ix. 16—29. 2 Chron. xxii. 1—9.

QUESTIONS.

By whom was Jehoram succeeded?

How long did he reign?

What particular reason is given for the great wickedness of this king?

How did he meet his death?

VII. ATHALIAH.

A. M. 3120.—B. C. 884.

On hearing of Ahaziah's death, his mother Athaliah slew all the seed-royal; that is, all who could claim descent from David, and so lay claim to the crown. Her own grandchildren were among the number, but this barbarous woman was lost to all the ties of affinity as well as to all the claims of humanity, and thought only of accomplishing her own ambitious views. By a signal interposition of Providence, one infant was preserved amidst the general slaughter, and brought up in concealment by his aunt Jehoshabeath, and her husband Jehoiada, the high-priest. Athaliah, supposing the destruction complete, established herself on the throne of Judah; but after six years, Jehoiada brought forth the young prince and proclaimed him king. The wicked queen, Athaliah, was slain just without the temple. She was the last of the family of Ahab. 2 Kings xi. 2 Chron. xxii. xxiii. 1—15.

QUESTIONS.

Who reigned after Ahaziah?

By what means did she gain possession of the throne?

Did she succeed in her cruel intention of destroying all the royal family?

How was the infant Joash preserved?

VIII. JOASH (OR JEHOAASH.)

A. M. 3126.—B. C. 878.

During the minority of the young king, his pious uncle and protector, Jehoiada, promoted great reformation both in religion and morals; and as long as Jehoiada lived, Joash continued to reign well, and seemed to have at heart the *best interests* of his people. But when his faithful monitor *was gone*, he declined so far as to connive at idolatry. He

spoiled the temple of its sacred treasures, in order to purchase the departure of Hazael king of Syria ; and was even so hardened in wickedness as to command the stoning of the prophet Zechariah, for his faithful reproofs of the sins of king and people. This Zechariah was no other than the son of Jehoiada, the benefactor of his early years ; and thus base ingratitude was added to the sins of idolatry, sacrilege and murder.—Joash was at length slain in a conspiracy of his own servants, after reigning in Judah forty years. 1 Kings xi. xii. 2 Chron. xxiii. xxiv.—During this reign, Jonah the prophet flourished. (See p. 136.)

QUESTIONS.

- What particulars attended the early part of Joash's reign ?
- How did he conduct himself after the death of Jehoiada ?
- Of what great act of ingratitude and cruelty was Joash guilty ?
- What was his end ?

IX. AMAZIAH.

A. M. 3166.—B. C. 838.

Joash was succeeded by his son Amaziah, of whom it is said that he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, but not with sincerity :—a proof among many more, that God regards the motive as well as the action, and that the most specious services are unavailing, unless the heart be right in His sight. The first act of his reign was to punish the murderers of his father.

During this reign, Judah was engaged in war with Edom, the king having engaged, in addition to his own army, a hundred thousand men of Israel, for an hundred talents of silver. But he was forbidden of the Lord to make use of these men, and was encouraged to expect deliverance without them ; which was accordingly granted. After this, Amaziah fell into idolatry, and being vain of his victory over the Edomites, sent a rash challenge to Joash, king of Israel. That which begins in vain glory, usually ends in disgrace. This affair terminated in the defeat of Judah, and in the loss of a great part of the sacred and royal treasures.

Amaziah reigned twenty-nine years, and at last was slain in a conspiracy. 2 Kings xiv. 2 Chron. xxv.

QUESTIONS.

- What was the character of Amaziah ?
- What assistance did he engage in the war against Edom ?
- Was he permitted to use the help of Israel ?
- In what did he act rashly, and what was the result ?

X. UZZAH (OR AZARIAH.)

A. M. 3194.—B. C. 816.

Amaziah was succeeded by his son Uzzah, (sometimes called Azariah.)—At first he reigned well, but as he became prosperous, his heart was lifted up to his own destruction. He was successful in war, and the internal affairs of his kingdom prospered; but these blessings, instead of raising his gratitude to the Giver of all, were made the occasions of pride and presumption. He went into the temple of the Lord, and in spite of all remonstrance, took a *censer and burnt *incense, which belonged to the priests alone. For this offence he was struck with leprosy, which abode with him to the day of his death. He reigned fifty-two years. 2 Kings xv. 1—7. 2 Chron. xxvi. The prophets Isaiah, Joel, and Hosea, began to prophesy in this reign, and foretold the calamities that were coming on the Jewish nation because of their sins.

QUESTIONS.

What particulars are recorded of Uzzah's reign?
 Of what particular instance of pride and presumption was he guilty?
 What punishment was inflicted on him?
 What prophets were sent in this reign?
 What did they particularly testify?

XI. JOTHAM.

A. M. 3246.—B. C. 758.

Jotham succeeded his father Uzzah, and reigned well. His reign was prosperous, but the people persisted in their wickedness, and therefore the prophets still testified against them. 2 Kings xv. 32—38. 2 Chron. xxvii.

QUESTIONS.

What was the character of Jotham's reign?
 Did the people reform, or did they persist in their sins?

XII. AHAZ.

A. M. 3302.—B. C. 742.

After Jotham, came his son Ahaz, who reigned very wickedly. He was proud, and lifted up in prosperity; and instead of repenting when affliction came upon him, in the time of his distress did he trespass yet more against the Lord. This is that king Ahaz! mark what an awful character. What hope can there be for him who is neither grateful for

the mercies of God, nor humbled under the strokes of his rod? In the time of Ahaz, the kings of Israel and of Syria, came up against Judah, but were not permitted to prevail. The prophet Isaiah foretold the destruction of these two kings within three years, which took place accordingly; but Ahaz treated the prophet and his message with indifference, if not with contempt.

After the first deliverance of Judah from Syria and Israel, the wickedness of Ahaz abounding yet more and more, the land of Judah was in a great measure laid waste by Pekah, king of Israel. In this distress, Ahaz sought help from Assyria, but in vain. The Edomites also, and the Philistines, made some successful attempts against Judah.

Afterwards, Ahaz obtained the aid of Assyria against Syria. The Assyrians took Damascus, the capital of Syria, and slew Rezin, the king. Pekah also, the king of Israel, was slain in a conspiracy, as Isaiah had foretold.

Notwithstanding these interpositions, Ahaz became still more idolatrous and wicked. He took many of the sacred vessels of the temple, and had them altered for heathen worship; and he sacrificed his own children to idols, according to the horrid practice of heathen nations.

Ahaz reigned sixteen years. 2 Kings xvi. 2 Chron. xxviii. Isaiah vii.—ix.

QUESTIONS.

Who reigned after Jotham?

What was his character in prosperity and in adversity?

Did the kings of Israel and Syria prevail against Ahaz?

How did the king receive the message of the prophet Isaiah?

Were his predictions fulfilled?

What acts of idolatry was Ahaz guilty of?

XIII. HEZEKIAH.

A. M. 3278.—B. C. 726.

Ahaz was succeeded by his son Hezekiah, who reigned long and well, and was a great blessing to the nation. He exerted himself zealously in abolishing idolatry, and restoring the worship of the true God. The brazen serpent made by Moses in the wilderness (see p. 71.) had been hitherto preserved, but Hezekiah found that it had become an occasion of idolatry to the people. He therefore destroyed it.

In the beginning of Hezekiah's reign, the people of Israel were carried into captivity, and Israel ceased to be a nation.

In this reign, the Assyrians came up against Judah, but Hezekiah encouraged the confidence of the people in God. Some years afterwards, the army of Sennacherib, king of Assyria, again came up against Judah, and Rabshakeh, the chief captain, treated Hezekiah with insolent contempt. He also blasphemed against the God of Judah, and endeavoured to drive the people to despondency and revolt. But the pious king went to the temple, and spread the case before the Lord. He also entreated the prayers of the prophet Isaiah, and received from him an assurance that God would plead the cause of Judah against the insulting foe. Accordingly, the angel of the Lord went forth by night and slew the whole army of the Assyrians, a hundred and eighty-five thousand men. Sennacherib, the king, was permitted to return to his own country, but was soon after slain by his two sons in the temple of his idol god at Nineveh.

After this, Hezekiah had a dangerous sickness, and was apparently drawing near to death, but he prayed earnestly to the Lord, and his life was prolonged fifteen years. The prophet Isaiah communicated to him this answer to his prayers, and gave this miraculous sign of its fulfilment,—that the sun should go back ten degrees on the dial of Ahaz.

But after this signal mercy, and considering the great prosperity that had attended his reign, the heart of Hezekiah was lifted up with vanity and vain glory. The king of Babylon sent messengers to congratulate him on his recovery, and he very imprudently displayed to them all his treasures. Isaiah the prophet reproved him for this, and foretold that those very treasures would be taken away to Babylon, and his own offspring carried into captivity. Hezekiah humbly submitted himself to the Divine decree, and was promised that peace should be prolonged through his life. He reigned over Judah twenty-nine years. 2 Kings xviii—xx. 2 Chron. xxix—xxxii. Isaiah xxxvi—xxxix.

QUESTIONS.

- Who was the next king of Judah, and what was his character?
- What did he do for the honour of God, and for the good of the people?
- How did the Assyrians attack Judah, in the reign of Hezekiah?
- Were they not overcome in a remarkable manner?
- What remarkable circumstance was connected with Hezekiah's sickness and recovery?
- How did he act after his recovery?
- What misfortunes succeeded?

XIV. MANASSEH.

A. M. 8306.—B. C. 608.

Manasseh succeeded his father Hezekiah. His reign was a sad reverse of that which preceded it. His wickedness rose to a dreadful height. He established idolatry, which his father had laboured to destroy. He made his son to pass through the fire to Moloch, and he caused the very streets of Jerusalem to run down with blood. The nation was now at its worst state; and though God in mercy sent prophets to call the king and people to repentance, they were despised and rejected. In consequence of this, many of the people were carried captive into the land of Assyria, and the king himself was grievously afflicted, bound with fetters, and cast into a dungeon. There he was brought to true penitence, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers. Thus Manasseh had abundant reason to say, "It is good for me that I have been afflicted." It pleased God to rescue Manasseh from his affliction, and restore him to the throne of his father. After this he reigned well, and died in peace, after a reign of fifty-five years. 2 Kings xxi. 2 Chron. xxxiii.

QUESTIONS.

What was the character of Manasseh?

What calamity befel him?

How did he behave in his affliction?

Was his penitence sincere?

Was he ever restored to his throne?

XV. AMON.

A. M. 3361.—B. C. 643.

Manasseh was succeeded by his son Amon, who followed his father in all his evil ways, but unhappily not in his penitence. He reigned only two years, and was slain in his own house, and by his own servants. 2 Kings xxi. 19—26. 2 Chron. xxxiii. 21—25.

QUESTIONS.

How did Amon, the son of Manasseh, conduct himself?

Did he imitate his father's penitence?

How did he come by his death?

XVI. JOSIAH.

A. M. 3363.—B. C. 641.

Josiah, the son of Amon, was, in all respects, a contrast to his father. He ascended the throne very young and was distinguished for early piety, tenderness of conscience, and zeal for the worship and service of God. He destroyed every vestige of idolatry,—thus fulfilling a prediction which had been given of him by the prophets more than three hundred years before. (1 Kings xiii. 2 and 2 Kings xxiii. 15—17.) In the thirteenth year of his reign, Jeremiah began to prophesy. The prophet was a young man, and, like the king, early and eminently pious. But the people were wicked and hardened, and the efforts of the king and the prophet to do them good, failed of effect, and only added to their condemnation.

Among other good works, Josiah caused the temple to be repaired. While this work was in progress, a copy of the law was found, which had been either concealed or mislaid. The king caused it to be publicly read, and inquired of the prophets the meaning of its awful threatenings. The prophet Huldah, was employed by the Lord to convey a message of mercy and peace to the king himself, assuring him that though the judgments God had threatened against a nation should certainly come to pass, yet that he should be gathered to his fathers in peace. In this reign the covenant of the Lord was renewed, and the feast of the passover kept with great solemnity, far beyond any thing that had been known for ages.

Josiah reigned thirty-one years, and was slain in battle with Pharaoh Nechoh, king of Egypt. He was greatly lamented by the people, and Jeremiah, the prophet, composed an elegy, or lamentation, for him, which is not preserved. (2 Kings xxii. xxiii. 2 Chron. xxxiv. xxxv. Also see the early chapters of the prophecies of Jeremiah.)

QUESTIONS.

- Who reigned after Amon?
- What was Josiah's character?
- By what prophet was he assisted in his endeavours to reform the people?
- What success attended their pious endeavours?
- What happened when the temple was repairing?
- How did Josiah act on receiving the book of the law?
- What promises of mercy were made to him?
- How did he meet with his death?

XVII. JEHOAHAZ (OR SHALLUM.)

A. M. 3204.—B. C. 610.

Jehoahaz (or Shallum) was made king on the death of his father. He did evil in the sight of the Lord. After three months the king was deposed, and the land of Judah, in a great measure, brought under the dominion of Pharaoh Nechoh, king of Egypt. That king took Jehoahaz away with him to Egypt, and made his brother, Eliakim, king in Judah. **2 Kings xxiii. 31—35. 2 Chron. xxxvi. 1—4.**

QUESTION.

What do we know of the short reign of Jehoahaz?

XVIII. JEHOIAKIM.

A. M. 3204.—B. C. 610.

Eliakim, whose name was changed by Pharaoh to Jehoiakim, reigned wickedly during eleven years. All that time the prophets continued to warn the rebellious Jews that the judgments of God were at hand; but both king and people hardened themselves, and despised the threatenings. Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, had gained great advantages over Egypt, and as Judea was now tributary to Egypt, Nebuchadnezzar attacked that land also. He took Jehoiakim, and bound him in fetters, to carry him to Jerusalem. He also took many of the young nobles of Judah, among whom were Daniel and his companions,—and he carried away part of the sacred treasures. Afterwards Jehoiakim humbled himself to Nebuchadnezzar, and promised to pay him tribute; on which he was released and permitted to return to his kingdom; but about three years afterwards Jehoiakim rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar, and all the nations under the influence of that powerful monarch were commanded to go up against Jerusalem. Jehoiakim was taken prisoner and slain with the sword, and his dead body cast out ignominiously into the common road, without the gates of Jerusalem, just as Jeremiah had prophesied. **2 Kings xxiii. 34—37; xxiv. 1—6. 2 Chron. xxxvi. 5—8; also Jer. xxii. xxxvi.**

[This carrying away by Nebuchadnezzar, in the reign of Jehoiakim, is reckoned as the commencement of the seventy years' captivity. We shall, therefore, now return to the reign of Rehoboam, and gather up the history of the kingdom of Israel, from the time of its separation from that of Judah. The reader will bear in mind that we are going over the same

period of history as that which has occupied our attention from p. 103.]

QUESTIONS.

Who succeeded Jehoahaz?

What happened to Judah while Jehoiakim was king?

How did Jehoiakim treat the warnings of the prophets?

Were the prophecies of Jeremiah fulfilled in his death?

By whom were the Jews carried away, and to what place?

THE HISTORY OF ISRAEL.

I. JEROBOAM.

A. M. 3636. — B. C. 974.

It will be remembered that all the kings of Israel were wicked and idolatrous. Jeroboam the First established idolatry in Israel. To prevent the people from going up to Jerusalem to worship, he set up two golden calves, one at Bethel, and one at Dan. He cut off the priests of the Lord from executing their office; and in consequence many of them forsook their possessions, and fled to Judah and Jerusalem. He then appointed priests from the lowest of the people; he ordained feasts in imitation of those at Jerusalem, and went himself to burn incense to the golden calf at Bethel. A prophet of the Lord was sent to reprove him, and to foretel the destruction of idolatry by Josiah, which was exactly fulfilled more than three hundred years afterwards: as a token thereof, he said that the altar would be immediately rent, and the ashes scattered. Enraged at these predictions, Jeroboam stretched forth his hand to seize the prophet, and immediately his hand was withered, and the altar rent. At the prayer of the prophet his hand was restored. The king then offered him a reward, but the prophet refused to receive even the slightest refreshment, having been so commanded of the Lord. As the prophet went home, he was met by an old prophet who pretended to have received a command of the Lord, and so seduced him into his house to eat bread. For this act of disobedience, the prophet, as he went on his way, was slain by a lion. The prophet who had seduced him, hearing of his death, fetched the corpse and buried it, greatly lamenting his death, and desiring to be buried beside him.

Jeroboam still persisted in his wicked ways. His eldest son, Abijah, being sick, Jeroboam sent his wife in disguise to the prophet Ahijah, (the same who many years before foretold Jeroboam's exaltation), to inquire whether the child

would recover. The prophet was instructed as to the real character of his visitor, and also was directed to pronounce to her the sentence of God against the wicked house of Jeroboam, every one of whom should be awfully cut off. The young prince alone, concerning whom she inquired, should come to his grave in peace, and die lamented; because that in him was found some good thing towards the Lord God of Israel. As she entered the house the child died, according to the prophet's word. Jeroboam himself died about a year afterwards. 1 Kings xii.—xiv. 2 Chron. xiii.

QUESTIONS.

What was the general character of the kings of Israel?

Did Jeroboam promote the worship of the true God?

When he burnt incense at an idol's altar, what did a prophet testify to him?

How did Jeroboam receive the prophet's message?

In what manner was it made evident that this prophet was sent by God?

How was the prophet seduced to disobedience?

What was the consequence?

On what occasion did Jeroboam send his wife to the prophet Ahijah?

How was she received?

Were the prophet's words fulfilled?

II. NADAB.

A. M. 9250.—B. C. 954.

Nadab had reigned some time with his father Jeroboam, and succeeded him. His wicked career was very short. Baasha, of the tribe of Issachar, conspired against him and slew him, and thus the house of Jeroboam was cut off, according to the word of the Lord. 1 Kings xv. 25—27.

QUESTIONS.

Who reigned after Jeroboam?

How was his short reign terminated?

III. BAASHA.

A. M. 9251.—B. C. 953.

Baasha having cut off Nadab, reigned in his stead. He too reigned very wickedly; and Hanani, the prophet of the Lord, was sent to declare that like judgments should come upon his wicked house, as had fallen on the house of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat. He reigned twenty-four years. 1 Kings xv. 27—34; xvi. 1—7.

QUESTIONS.

What did Jezebel tempt?

What was threatened against his house?

IV. ELAH.

A. D. 872.—B. C. 928.

Elah succeeded his father. In the second year of his reign his servant Zimri slew him while in a state of intoxication, and then usurped the throne. He also destroyed all the gods of Elah. 1 Kings xvi. 8—14.

QUESTIONS.

How did Elah, the son of Baasha, meet his death?

V. ZIMRI.

A. D. 872.—B. C. 927.

His reign of this usurper was short. After seven days, he was slain by Omri, the captain of the host, as king, and his son, Tibni, the rival son.—Zimri, in despair, set fire to the palace, and died in the midst of it. 1 Kings xvi. 9—20.

QUESTIONS.

How did Zimri, the usurper, reign, and in what manner did he die?

VI. OMRI.

A. D. 872.—B. C. 927.

Omri reigned over Israel twelve years, and was notorious for wickedness. He bought the hill of Samaria, and built there the city so called, which was henceforth the metropolis of Israel. 1 Kings xvi. 23—28.

QUESTIONS.

What was the character of Omri?

What city did he build?

VII. AHAZ.

A. D. 803.—B. C. 743.

Ahaz succeeded his father Omri, and even exceeded his father in wickedness. He married Jezebel, and became a professed worshipper of Baal. With such countenance and example, the people became corrupt and idolatrous to a most awful degree.

In his reign the city of Jericho was rebuilt, notwithstanding the Divine prohibition. Josh. vi. 26; but, as was then predicted, the builder lost his eldest son in laying the foundation, and his youngest in setting up the gates.

This wicked reign is distinguished by the history of the prophet Elijah, who was sent to Ahab to foretel a severe drought and famine. Having delivered this message, he was commanded by the Lord to go and hide himself by the brook Cherith. There he was for a long time supplied by ravens; who, according to the promise of God, daily brought him bread and meat, and he drank of the brook. At length the brook dried up, and then he was directed to go to Zarephath, a city of Sidon, where a poor widow woman was commanded to sustain him. When he entered the city he saw the poor woman in a state of the deepest poverty and distress, gathering a few sticks to dress her last scanty meal for herself and her child; and then expecting to lie down and die. The prophet asked her to give him a little water, which must then have been scarce and valuable. As she went to fetch it, he farther requested her to give him a part of her meal, promising her, on the word of the Lord God of Israel, that her stock should be miraculously multiplied, until the Lord should send rain on the earth. The woman believed the prophet's word, and complied with his request; and the small quantity she at first possessed, scarcely sufficient for a single meal, afforded an ample supply for herself, her child, and the prophet, as long as the famine lasted.

During this time her son fell sick and died, but at the prayer of the prophet was restored to life. When the famine had lasted three years, Elijah was directed to go and shew himself to Ahab. The scarcity still prevailed to a dreadful degree, and the wicked king ascribing it to the instrumentality of the prophet, had sought for him in every direction, intending to take away his life. As Elijah went, he met a courtier of Ahab, named Obadiah, who, though in the service of Ahab, was a good and holy man. When Jezebel, in her rage and fury, tried to cut off all the prophets of the Lord, Obadiah concealed and protected a hundred of them, and supplied them with food. Elijah sent word by Obadiah that he was in Samaria. Obadiah feared to deliver the message, lest Ahab should suspect him of concealing Elijah, and put him to death in his stead, but Elijah said he would certainly present himself before Ahab. He did so, and boldly told the king that all the present distress was occasioned by his idolatry and wickedness; and he insisted on having all the priests of Baal to meet him on Mount Carmel, and the peopled assembled to witness a solemn trial and appeal to the true God. Accordingly, four hundred and fifty priests of Baal came: a bullock

QUESTIONS.

What happened in the reign of Jehoahaz?
When deliverance was granted to him from the Syrians, did the mercy lead him to repentance?

XII. JOASH (OR JEHOASH.)

A. M. 3165.—B. C. 839.

Shortly after the accession of Joash to the entire government of Israel, the prophet Elisha died. During his illness he was visited by Joash. The prophet directed the king to take some arrows and smite upon the ground; he did so thrice, and then stayed. The prophet reproved him for not persevering, and told him that this was an emblem of the overthrow of the Syrians, which would have been complete but for his half-heartedness. The prophet soon after died, and was greatly lamented, and honourably buried. Some time afterwards a man being buried in his sepulchre, revived.

According to the prediction of Elisha, Joash obtained three victories over the Syrians, and then stayed.

After this, Amaziah, king of Judah, rashly challenged Joash, and was put to the worse before him, with considerable loss, (p. 115.) Joash then returned to Samaria, where he soon afterwards died, having reigned sixteen years. 2 Kings xiii. 10—25; xiv. 1—16.

QUESTIONS.

What took place in the reign of Joash?
How did the dying prophet foretel the overthrow of the Syrians?
Was the conquest of Syria complete?
What happened in the grave of Elisha?

XIII. JEROBOAM.

A. M. 3479.—B. C. 825.

Joash was succeeded by his son, Jeroboam, the second of that name, and who followed the example of the former Jeroboam in idolatry and wickedness. He was, however, permitted to work some deliverances for Israel, according to a prediction of the prophet Jonah. He reigned forty-one years. 2 Kings xiv. 16—29. After the death of Jeroboam, the nation was for three years in a state of civil war.

XIV. After this, Zechariah, a son of Jeroboam, reigned six months, but reigning ill, was slain by Shallum. Thus ended the race of Jehu.

XV. Shallum reigned one month, and was slain by Menahem.

XVI. Menahem reigned ten years: during his reign the land of Israel was made tributary to Assyria.

XVII. Pekahiah, his son, reigned two years, and was slain by one of his captains, named Pekah.

XVIII. Pekah went up against Judah with Rezin, king of Syria, but they did not prevail. Rezin was slain by the Assyrians, and Pekah by Hoshea, who succeeded him. (p. 117.) 2 Kings xv. xvi.

XIX. In the reign of Hoshea, Israel again became tributary to Assyria; but afterwards Hoshea revolted against Assyria, and entered into alliance with Egypt. Shalmaneser, king of Assyria, immediately led his army against Samaria, which was taken after a siege of three years. The people were immediately carried away into captivity, and, from that time, Israel ceased to be a nation. Thus the threatenings as well as the promises of God, are surely accomplished in their appointed time. Judah was preserved a few years longer, until that people also had filled up the measure of their iniquities. 2 Kings xvii. xviii. 1—12. The captivity of Israel happened in the reign of Hezekiah, king of Judah.

QUESTIONS.

What was the character of the second Jeroboam?

Did he work any deliverances for Israel?

What prophet had foretold them?

What happened after the death of Jeroboam?

Who was Zechariah, and how long did he reign?

How did Shallum obtain the crown of Israel?

How did he lose it?

What happened in the reign of Menahem?

Who succeeded Menahem?

By whom was Pekahiah slain?

In what enterprise did Pekah join with Rezin, king of Syria?

What was the result?

What happened in the reign of Hoshea?

Were there any more kings of Israel?

Who reigned in Judah when Israel was carried into captivity?

Of the prophets not particularly mentioned in the course of the history, Joel and Zephaniah prophesied in Judah; Joel, about the time of Isaiah; and Zephaniah with, or rather before, Jeremiah.

Hosea and Amos prophesied in Israel; they were contemporary with Isaiah, but Amos did not live so long. Micah lived with Isaiah and Amos: his prophecies belong to both Judah and Israel; Nahum, in Judah, in the reign of Hezekiah; he foretold the ruin of Nineveh.

Obadiah and Habakkuk were contemporary with Jeremiah and Ezekiel; they foretell the ruin of the enemies of Israel, which Nebuchadnezzar fulfilled.

obtain the king's favour; and perceiving his heart set upon the enterprise, they assured him of success. But Jehoshaphat was not satisfied with the integrity of these men, and inquired for another, a prophet of the Lord. Ahab very reluctantly introduced Micaiah, whom he said he hated, because he had often testified evil against him. Micaiah predicted the failure of the enterprise, and the death of Ahab in it. On this, Zedekiah, one of the false prophets, smote and reproached Micaiah, and the king ordered him to be kept in prison till he should return in peace. But Micaiah, in the presence of all the people, appealed to the event to attest his prophetic veracity: "If thou come at all in peace, then the Lord hath not spoken by me." In order to screen himself from observation, the king of Israel went in disguise to the battle. He however fell, according to the words of the prophet, and his blood was licked from the chariot by the dogs in Samaria, where also he was buried. 1 Kings xvi. 29,—xxii. 2 Chron. xviii.

QUESTIONS.

Who succeeded Omri?

What was his wife's name and character?

What city was presumptuously rebuilt in this reign?

What distinguished prophet appeared in Israel?

How was Elijah provided for when he hid himself from Ahab?

Where did he go when he left the brook Cherith?

What particulars have we of the widow of Zarephath?

What was the character of Obadiah?

What took place between Elijah and the prophets of Baal?

What was Elijah's state of mind when he fled from Jezebel?

How was he encouraged?

How long did Elijah remain in Mount Horeb?

What particular deliverance was granted to Ahab?

What crime did Ahab commit towards Naboth?

What happened when he got possession of Naboth's vineyard?

What did Elijah foretell?

Who advised Ahab to go against the Syrians?

Who advised him not to go?

VIII. AHAZIAH.

A. M. 3107.—B. C. 897.

Ahab was succeeded by his son Ahaziah, who followed the evil example of his wicked parents. During his short reign the Moabites rebelled against Israel. In the second year of his reign, the king fell through a lattice, and being seriously injured, sent his servants to inquire of Baal-zebub, god of Ekron, whether he should recover. Elijah the prophet came forth to meet the messengers, and told them that the king would die, at the same time reproaching him for neglecting

the God of Israel, and seeking after the false gods of the heathen. The wicked king, enraged at this message, sent a captain and fifty men to seize the prophet; but fire came down from heaven and consumed them. A second captain and fifty men shared the like fate; but the third captain, convinced how hopeless a thing it was to resist God, implored mercy for himself and his company, and Elijah was then directed to accompany them to the city. He did so, and in the king's presence repeated the denunciation of his death, which took place accordingly. Ahaziah reigned two years. 1 Kings xxii. 51—53. 2 Kings i.

QUESTIONS.

What was the result of the battle?

Who succeeded Ahab on the throne?

What was the occasion of Ahaziah's death?

In what manner did he act during his illness?

What message did the prophet Elijah send to him?

What befell those whom Ahaziah sent to seize the prophet?

Were his words fulfilled?

IX. JEHORAM.

A. M. 3109.—B. C. 895.

Ahaziah having no son, was succeeded by his brother Jehoram. About the time of his accession, the prophet Elijah was miraculously conveyed to heaven in a chariot of fire; his prophetic mantle descending on his servant Elisha, as a confirmation of his appointment to succeed him in the prophetic office, and also as a token that his prayer was granted, and that a double portion of the spirit of Elijah should rest upon him. Having witnessed the ascent of his master, Elisha returned to the schools of the prophets at Jericho. On his way thither he smote the waters of the river Jordan with the mantle, and called upon the Lord God of Elijah, and the waters parted asunder, as they had before done for Elijah, and he passed over. This was the beginning of a long series of miracles which this prophet was permitted to work, to display the glory of the true God. At Jericho, the inhabitants complained that though their city was pleasant, the waters were unwholesome, and the ground, in consequence, barren. Elisha cast salt into the spring, and in the name of the Lord healed the waters.

On leaving Jericho, and going up to Bethel, Elisha was mocked by the children of the place, who, in contemptuous allusion to the ascent of Elijah, said to him, "Go up, thou bald-head—go up, thou bald-head." Two she-bears came out of the woods and tare forty and two of these children,—

an awful warning against the sin of reproaching and reviling any—especially those who are distinguished as the servants of God.

In consequence of the rebellion of Moab against Israel, Jehoram invited the aid of Jehoshaphat, the king of Judah, and they went together to fight against Moab, (p.112.) They were distressed for want of water, but Elisha encouraged them to expect deliverance, and directed the people to dig trenches. They did so, and abundance of water was given them without any sound of rain. At the same time, the Moabites were caused to hear a sound, which so deceived them, that they concluded that Judah and Israel had smitten one another, and that they had nothing to do but gather the spoil. They therefore rushed heedlessly into the camp of Israel, and were smitten with a great slaughter, the Israelites pursuing them even to their own land.

We have here several interesting miracles wrought by the prophet Elisha:—the multiplying the oil of a poor prophet's widow, for the payment of her debts, and the maintenance of her family; the gift of a son to the hospitable Shunamite, and the raising of this child from the dead; the detection of poisonous herbs in pottage, in the time of famine, and healing it by casting in meal; and the satisfying a hundred men with a small quantity of bread. We have next the cure of Naaman, a Syrian general, who was a *leper. By means of a little captive maid in his family, Naaman heard of the fame of Elisha, and went to the land of Israel to be healed by him. The prophet directed him to go and wash seven times in Jordan. At first he scorned this simple direction; but afterwards was persuaded to obey the prophet's word, and was perfectly and miraculously healed. Thus convinced of the power of Israel's God, he resolved henceforth to worship Him. Naaman urged on the prophet to accept a rich and liberal expression of his gratitude, but the prophet steadfastly declined it. Gehazi, the prophet's servant, aware of this, ran after Naaman, and by false pretences obtained of him two *talents of silver, and two changes of raiment. On his return Elisha challenged him with the transaction, and on his adding to his former guilt that of falsehood, he was immediately struck with an incurable *leprosy. Another of Elisha's miracles was wrought in behalf of the sons of the prophets. They were felling wood on the banks of Jordan, in order to enlarge their dwelling, when one of them dropped an axe-head into the water. He was greatly distressed, especially as the article was borrowed. Elisha directed him

to cut a stick and cast it in. He did so, and immediately the iron rose to the surface, and was recovered. It is a great encouragement to know that our mean affairs are not beneath the notice of an all-wise and all-powerful God. He superintends them all, and causes all to work for good for them that love and serve Him.

Elisha's next miracle was of public importance. There was war between Syria and Israel, and all the secret counsels of the king of Syria being miraculously made known to Elisha, he informed the king of Israel, and so defeated the plans of Syria. The king of Syria charged his servants with treachery, but was assured that Elisha the prophet informed the king of Israel the words that he spake in his most secret retreats. The king of Syria, therefore, sent an army to surround the city, and seize the prophet. The prophet's servant beheld with dismay these hostile approaches; but, at the prophet's prayer, he was enabled to discern an angelic guard surrounding them, far more numerous and powerful than all their foes. In like manner the Syrians were struck with blindness, and suffered themselves to be led into the heart of Samaria. Their sight was then restored. The king of Israel was about to smite them, but, at the suggestion of the prophet, he dismissed them peaceably, and no further attempts were, at that time, made by Syria against Israel.

Some years afterwards there was again war between Syria and Israel. Benhadad, with all his host, besieged Samaria, and in consequence a grievous famine and severe distress prevailed. The king of Israel, driven to despair rather than penitence, vowed vengeance against Elisha, whom he regarded as the author of the calamity, and sent messengers to take him. Elisha foretold that on the very next day there would be abundance of food. One of the lords of the court unbelievably derided the prophet, but was assured that the plenty certainly should occur, and that he should behold, but not partake of it. Accordingly, that very night, four * leprous men, sitting at the gate of the city, (which, on account of their disease, they dared not enter,) and nearly famishing for want of food, resolved to go into the camp of the Syrians, under the possibility that their lives might be spared, and their wants supplied. On entering the camp they found it deserted, for the Lord had caused the Syrians to hear a noise of horses and chariots, at which they fled in dismay, leaving behind them all kinds of treasures. The lepers hastened to the city, and gave notice of what they had seen; and the spoil being taken possession of, provisions were as abundant and

as cheap as the prophet had foretold. The unbelieving lord, having charge of the gate, was crushed to death by the multitudes who crowded forward to obtain food.

After this the land of Israel was visited with a severe famine, which lasted seven years. Elisha advised his friend, the Shunamite, whose son he had raised to life, to go for succour into the land of the Philistines. She did so, and, on her return, received her lands and fruits by order of the king, in consequence of his having heard her remarkable story from Gehazi, the prophet's servant.

During this famine, Benhadad, king of Syria, being sick, sent to inquire of Elisha the prophet the issue of his disease. Elisha replied, that his disease was not in itself mortal, but that he would certainly die. He also, with great feeling, foretold to Hazael, the messenger, the atrocities of which he would shortly be guilty. Hazael indignantly replied, "Is thy servant a dog, that he should do these things?" He, however, very speedily fulfilled them. The king of Syria died, and Hazael reigned in his stead, and proved as oppressive and cruel as the prophet had represented. We know now not what we should do in other circumstances or stations, but it becomes us always to be humble and contented, and pray for grace to do our duty in that wherein God has been pleased to place us.

About this time Elisha sent one of the sons of the prophets to anoint Jehu king of Israel, and as executioner of the Divine threatenings against the house of Ahab. Jehu was a man of ambitious, turbulent, revengeful, and ostentatious spirit, and he went forth on his awful commission without reluctance.

Jehoram, king of Israel, was sick at Jezreel, having been wounded by the Syrians, and Ahaziah, king of Judah, was visiting him there. On hearing of Jehu's approach they went forth to meet him, and were both slain, (p. 114.) Ahaziah was carried to Jerusalem and buried, but Jehoram was cast to the dogs in the vineyard of Naboth, as Elijah had declared. A like fate overtook Jezebel. She was thrown from a palace window in Jezreel, and devoured by dogs. 2 Kings ii.—ix.

QUESTIONS.

1. Was Ahaziah succeeded by a son?
2. What remarkable circumstance occurred about the time of Jehoram's accession?
3. Who succeeded Elijah in the prophetic office?
4. What was the first miracle wrought by Elisha?
5. What miracle did he work at Jericho?
6. What insult did he meet at Bethel, and how was it punished?

5. What happened when Jehoram and Jehoshaphat went against Moab?
6. What miracle did Elisha work for a prophet's widow?
7. How was the Shunamite rewarded who had been kind to Elisha?
8. What other miracles were wrought by Elisha in the time of famine?
9. What do we know of Naaman the Syrian?
10. Of what crime was Gehazi guilty?
11. How was he punished?
12. What miracle was wrought for the sons of the prophets at Jordan?
13. What service did Elisha render the king of Israel against the Syrians?
14. How was Elisha protected from his enemies?
15. What happened to the Syrian army who came to take Elisha?
16. How was a great famine in Samaria occasioned?
17. In what manner did Jehoram act towards Elisha?
18. Did Elisha predict the return of plenty?
19. How were his words accomplished?
20. Who discovered and made known the flight of the Syrian army?
21. What befell the unbelieving lord?
22. Who was Hazael?
23. What did Elisha say to Hazael?
24. Did subsequent events verify the prophet's words?
25. Who was anointed to succeed Jehoram as king of Israel?
26. How did Jehoram meet his death?

X. JEHU.

A.M. 3120.—B.C. 854.

Jehu having slain Jehoram and Jezebel, caused the remaining seventy sons of Ahab, and all the priests of Baal, to be slain. He also destroyed the house and image of Baal, and obtained for himself the crown of Israel. His character was evil, though he had been employed to effect the purposes of God. He reigned twenty-eight years, and the throne was established to his family for four generations. 2 Kings ix. x.

QUESTIONS.

1. What particular vengeance did Jehu execute?
2. What was Jehu's character?
3. What became of Jezebel?

XI. JEHOAHAS.

A. M. 3148.—B. C. 856.

In the reign of Jehoahaz, who succeeded his father Jehu, the Syrians oppressed Israel, and Jehoahaz besought the Lord, and obtained relief. Jehoahaz, however, was a wicked man, and persisted in his evil courses. He died after a reign of seventeen years, and was succeeded by his son, Joash, who had already reigned some time with him. 2 Kings xiii. 1—9.

QUESTIONS.

What happened in the reign of Jehoahaz?

When deliverance was granted to him from the Syrians, did the mercy lead him to repentance?

XII. JOASH (OR JEHOASH.)

A. M. 3165.—B. C. 830.

Shortly after the accession of Joash to the entire government of Israel, the prophet Elisha died. During his illness he was visited by Joash. The prophet directed the king to take some arrows and smite upon the ground; he did so thrice, and then stayed. The prophet reproved him for not persevering, and told him that this was an emblem of the overthrow of the Syrians, which would have been complete but for his half-heartedness. The prophet soon after died, and was greatly lamented, and honourably buried. Some time afterwards a man being buried in his sepulchre, revived.

According to the prediction of Elisha, Joash obtained three victories over the Syrians, and then stayed.

After this, Amaziah, king of Judah, rashly challenged Joash, and was put to the worse before him, with considerable loss, (p. 115.) Joash then returned to Samaria, where he soon afterwards died, having reigned sixteen years. 2 Kings xiii. 10—25; xiv. 1—16.

QUESTIONS.

What took place in the reign of Joash?

How did the dying prophet foretel the overthrow of the Syrians?

Was the conquest of Syria complete?

What happened in the grave of Elisha?

XIII. JEROBOAM.

A. M. 3479.—B. C. 825.

Joash was succeeded by his son, Jeroboam, the second of that name, and who followed the example of the former Jeroboam in idolatry and wickedness. He was, however, permitted to work some deliverances for Israel, according to a prediction of the prophet Jonah. He reigned forty-one years. 2 Kings xiv. 16—29. After the death of Jeroboam, the nation was for three years in a state of civil war.

XIV. After this, Zechariah, a son of Jeroboam, reigned six months, but reigning ill, was slain by Shallum. Thus ended the race of Jehu.

XV. Shallum reigned one month, and was slain by Menahem.

XVI. Menahem reigned ten years: during his reign the land of Israel was made tributary to Assyria.

XVII. Pekahiah, his son, reigned two years, and was slain by one of his captains, named Pekah.

XVIII. Pekah went up against Judah with Rezin, king of Syria, but they did not prevail. Rezin was slain by the Assyrians, and Pekah by Hoshea, who succeeded him. (p. 117.) 2 Kings xv. xvi.

XIX. In the reign of Hoshea, Israel again became tributary to Assyria; but afterwards Hoshea revolted against Assyria, and entered into alliance with Egypt. Shalmaneser, king of Assyria, immediately led his army against Samaria, which was taken after a siege of three years. The people were immediately carried away into captivity, and, from that time, Israel ceased to be a nation. Thus the threatenings as well as the promises of God, are surely accomplished in their appointed time. Judah was preserved a few years longer, until that people also had filled up the measure of their iniquities. 2 Kings xvii. xviii. 1—12. The captivity of Israel happened in the reign of Hezekiah, king of Judah.

QUESTIONS.

What was the character of the second Jeroboam?

Did he work any deliverances for Israel?

What prophet had foretold them?

What happened after the death of Jeroboam?

Who was Zechariah, and how long did he reign?

How did Shallum obtain the crown of Israel?

How did he lose it?

What happened in the reign of Menahem?

Who succeeded Menahem?

By whom was Pekahiah slain?

In what enterprise did Pekah join with Rezin, king of Syria?

What was the result?

What happened in the reign of Hoshea?

Were there any more kings of Israel?

Who reigned in Judah when Israel was carried into captivity?

Of the prophets not particularly mentioned in the course of the history, Joel and Zephaniah prophesied in Judah; Joel, about the time of Isaiah; and Zephaniah with, or rather before, Jeremiah.

Hosea and Amos prophesied in Israel; they were contemporary with Isaiah, but Amos did not live so long. Micah lived with Isaiah and Amos: his prophecies belong to both Judah and Israel; Nahum, in Judah, in the reign of Hezekiah; he foretold the ruin of Nineveh.

Obadiah and Habakkuk were contemporary with Jeremiah and Ezekiel; they foretell the ruin of the enemies of Israel, which Nebuchadnezzar fulfilled.

THE HISTORY OF JONAH.

Jonah, the prophet, was a native of Gath-hepher, in Galilee. He is supposed to have prophesied to the ten tribes of Israel, early in the reign of Jehoahaz, (or some think in the reign of the second Jeroboam.) He foretold the enlargement of the coasts of Israel, which took place in the reign of Jeroboam, 2 Kings xiv. 25.

But the book that bears his name, and which is almost wholly historical, relates only to his mission to Nineveh, and records some singular events connected with it.

Nineveh was the capital of the Assyrian empire. The wickedness of the place had risen to an enormous pitch, and God commanded Jonah to go and testify against it. Jonah, though on the whole a good man, was of a perverse, timid, and selfish spirit, and he shrunk from the enterprise, either fearing for his own safety in so wicked a city, or for his credit in case the judgments threatened should be averted by penitence. He, therefore, fled from his commission, and went in an opposite direction, intending to go by ship to Tarshish. But a dreadful storm arose, and the sailors finding all attempts to manage the ship quite useless, cried every man to his god. But Jonah, the only man among them who knew the true God, and for whose disobedience the storm visited them, was fast asleep.—What an instance of the power of sin to stupify the conscience!

The storm continuing to rage with unusual fury, they concluded there must be some guilty individual on board, for whose sake the tempest pursued them. This as strikingly shews the power of conscience, even in the most ignorant. There is a feeling in the human mind that sin deserves punishment, and that there is a God of justice who sees, and who will reckon for it in some way or other.

They drew lots to find the guilty person, and the lot fell upon Jonah. Jonah immediately confessed himself the cause of the calamity; and the sailors, after striving in vain to contend with the storm, and praying that they might not be charged with the life they so reluctantly sacrificed, threw him overboard, and immediately the tempest ceased. But the Lord had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah, and in that situation he was preserved alive three days and three nights. There he deeply humbled himself in the sight of God, confessed his guilt, and pleaded for mercy. The fish then cast him on shore, and again he was commanded to go to Nineveh.

He went, and proclaimed in the streets, "Yet forty days and Nineveh shall be overthrown." The king and people on hearing this, were alarmed, and humbly they turned to God with fasting and prayers; and forsook their evil ways, and the Lord was pleased to look upon them in mercy, and to turn away the judgments that He had threatened.

This greatly irritated the peevish prophet, who thought his own credit would be injured by it; and he even went so far as to justify his former disobedience; and his present discontent. But God condescended to reason with him; and to instruct him by an fable. As Jonah sat in the scorching sun, a gourd hastily sprang up and sheltered him; with this he was greatly delighted. But at night a worm attacked the root of his gourd, and in the morning it was withered and dead; then Jonah was exceedingly distressed. On this the Lord reasoned with him; that if he felt such tenderness for a frail plant, in which he had bestowed no labour, should not the tender mercies of God be over the works of his hands, and the spirits which He had created? Jonah,

QUESTIONS.

1. In what reign is Jonah supposed to have lived?
2. Did he prophesy any thing concerning Israel?
3. To what people was his message chiefly sent?
4. Was Jonah obedient to the command of God?
5. When unwilling to go to Nineveh, whither did he flee?
6. What danger pursued him as he went?
7. How was Jonah's guilt detected?
8. What was done to him in consequence?
9. What extraordinary means were employed for his preservation?
10. Did he afterwards go to Nineveh?
11. What effect did his preaching produce?
12. Did Jonah rejoice when the mercy of God was extended to this peevish people?
13. How was his petulance reproved?

PERIOD VII.

THE JEWISH CAPTIVITY.

I. EVENTS AT JERUSALEM.

A. M. from 3228—3408.—B. C. from 606—538.

The captivity commenced in the reign of Jehoiakim (see p. 121.) On his death his son, Jehoiachin, became king; (see p. 121.)

QUESTIONS.

In whose reign did the captivity commence?

By what king was Judea conquered, and Jerusalem destroyed?

Whither were the captives carried?

What distinguished prophet was among the captives carried away with Jehoiakim?

When Jehoiakim was carried away, who succeeded him?

What prophet chiefly foretold the destruction of Jerusalem throughout the reign of Zedekiah?

What effect was produced by his reproofs?

What became of the king and his family?

Who governed Judea after Zedekiah?

What became of the Jews who remained after the captivity?

What nations beside Judea were punished by Nebuchadnezzar?

II. THE CAPTIVITY.—EVENTS AT BABYLON.

A. M. 3398, 3468.—B. C. 606, 536.

Among the earliest captives carried away in the reign of Jehoiakim were four young princes of Judah. Daniel (whom in Babylon they called Belteshazzar), and his three companions Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, (to whom were given the names of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.) These youths were taken into the palace and educated, in order to their being employed in the king's service; a daily portion of food was sent them from the king's table; but with these luxuries there was generally some mixture of idolatry, to avoid which these noble youths forbore to partake of them, and begged to be permitted to feed on the simplest diet, pulse and water; and God so blessed their pious self-denial, that they thrived more on this food than all those who partook of the royal dainties. They applied themselves diligently to study, and made such attainments that they were reckoned among the *magicians or wise men; and in this character they were soon called into notice. The king Nebuchadnezzar had a dream, which, though he could not even recollect its particulars, gave him great uneasiness of mind. He called for all his wise men, who pretended to judge of future and secret events by the stars, and by other superstitious practices, but not one of them could satisfy the king, therefore he ordered them all to be slain. Daniel, on hearing of this, joined his companions in prayer to God, and to them was given a knowledge of the * mystery; the dream was prophetic, and foretold the destinies of the empires then existing, and also the kingdom of the Messiah, which should outlive them all. The king was satisfied with the explanation, and, struck with the knowledge which God had given

to his servants, he promoted Daniel to a place of great authority in the government, and also his companions under him.

Some time afterwards, Nebuchadnezzar set up a golden image on the plain of Dura, and commanded all his people to worship it, declaring that if any failed to comply, they should be cast into a burning fiery furnace. Daniel seems to have been absent at this time, but his three companions declared that they dared not worship an idol for the fear of man, however great. The king tried to persuade them, and said, there was no god that could deliver out of his hand; but the young men were unmoved by his threats and persuasions, and said, the God they trusted was able to deliver them; and whatever might be the result, they would not disobey His commandments: the king then commanded them to be cast bound into a furnace, heated seven times hotter than usual. So intense was the heat that it slew the men who threw them in, but the fire had no power on them; they were seen walking unhurt in the midst of the flames; only their fetters were consumed. This great deliverance so impressed the mind of the king with a sense of the power and greatness of the God of Israel, that he forbade his servants, on pain of death, to speak against a God who could thus deliver.

But these convictions did not cure the king of his pride, vain-glory, and oppression. Some years afterwards he had another dream, which he related to Daniel, and received from him the interpretation. His own circumstances were represented as a flourishing tree, against which a decree went forth to hew it down; and himself, as being sentenced for his pride, to be deprived of reason, and degraded to a level with the brutes. Daniel earnestly exhorted the king to improve the season granted him for repentance; but no good effects were produced; and a year afterwards, as the haughty king walked in his palace, and said "Is not this great Babylon that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the glory of my majesty?" at that very moment the decree was executed. He went from the habitations of man, and dwelt and fed with brutes for seven years. After that his reason was restored to him, and he humbly acknowledged the dominion of God, and his wise and gracious dealings with the children of men.

Nebuchadnezzar died about a year after this. He was succeeded by his son Evil-merodach, who released Jehoiachin, king of Judah, after thirty-seven years' imprisonment.

and treated him kindly all the rest of his days. See Jer. lii. 31—33. 2 Kings xxv. 27—30.

In the reign of Belshazzar, the grandson of Nebuchadnezzar, Daniel had a dream or vision, which, under the figure of four beasts, shewed the four great monarchies that reigned or should reign in the earth; the Assyrian, the Persian, the Grecian, and the Roman empires. It also signified the speedy downfall of Babylon. Dan. vii.

Belshazzar was a profane and wicked king. He was also very unsuccessful in his government, and gave great dissatisfaction to his subjects. At this time he was at war with the Medes and Persians; and Cyrus, the Persian general, was besieging the city; but the king and people were very secure, flattering themselves that they had resources within the city that would enable them to sustain any length of siege; and according to all human probability, they might have held out a very long time, but Cyrus formed a plan to draw off the waters of the Euphrates, the great river of Babylon, and fixed on the night of a great festival as the fittest time for his enterprise, when the people might be off their guard.

At this feast the king and his nobles drank to excess, and in profane mirth, called for the sacred vessels which Nebuchadnezzar had brought out of the Jewish temple, that they might drink out of them to the honour of their idols, and to shew their contempt of Jehovah. While they were thus profanely engaged, there appeared the fingers of a man's hand, which wrote on the wall. The king could not read the writing, yet was greatly alarmed at what he saw. His knees smote together, and the joints of his loins were loosed with terror. He anxiously sought an explanation of the writing, which Daniel, the prophet, was enabled to give him. It was the sentence of his own doom! the God whom he had blasphemed, decreed that his kingdom and his life should be taken from him, and that very night Cyrus effected his entrance into the city, surprised the palace, and slew the king.

This was the termination of the Chaldean, Assyrian, or Babylonian empire. It now passed into the hands of Darius the Mede, uncle and father-in-law to Cyrus. Three presidents were appointed to govern Babylon, of whom Daniel was chief. He was highly esteemed by the king for his wisdom and fidelity, but those around him were envious, and sought to do him an injury. They watched narrowly, if they could detect any impropriety in Daniel's management of affairs;

but he was so faithful and prudent that they despaired of finding fault in him, unless it were in the matter of his religion. They therefore craftily persuaded the king that it would add greatly to his dignity and authority if he forbade his subjects from offering a prayer to any God or man, except himself, for the space of thirty days, on pain of being cast into a den of lions. Daniel, however, prayed as usual three times a-day, with his chamber windows open towards Jerusalem, as was the practice of the pious Jews, Jerusalem being the place where God had fixed His especial presence. Daniel's enemies watched for this, and soon gave notice of it, and then the king perceived their crafty drift to ruin Daniel. But the laws of the Medes and Persians, however mistaken, might not be altered, and Daniel was given to the lions. But the God to whom he prayed, and in whom he trusted, prevented the lions from injuring him, and in the morning he was found safe and well. The king greatly rejoiced in his preservation, and caused the fact to be proclaimed to all his subjects, that they might fear the God of Daniel. But though the lions did not harm the holy prophet, they instantly destroyed his enemies, whom the king ordered to be thrown into the den. Happy is he who has the God of Daniel for his help! miserable he who has made God his enemy!

After this Daniel continued in his high office, and lived to a good old age. He had some very remarkable visions, foretelling many changes in events, at the time of the predictions most unlikely, but which were all fulfilled in their season. Some of these predictions very clearly told the exact time of the Messiah's appearance, and that He should be cut off as a sacrifice for others; and they even carry on the mind of the inquirer into the state of the christian church as long as time shall last, and to the general resurrection at the last day. Daniel.

When Darius died, Cyrus became king; he returned to Babylon, and reigned seven years. Daniel was yet living, and a great man in the government. He no doubt influenced the mind of Cyrus on behalf of the captive Jews; and, in all probability, shewed him the writings of the prophet Isaiah, published two hundred years before, in which he is expressly mentioned by name as raised up for their deliverance. (See Isaiah xlv. xlv.) And in the first year of his reign, Cyrus issued a decree, granting permission to the Jews to return to their own land, and rebuild the temple of the Lord at Jerusalem. This took place exactly at the close of the seventy years. 2 Chron. xxxvi. 22, 23.

QUESTIONS.

Which four Jewish princes were chiefly distinguished in Babylon?
 What striking instance of self-denial and piety did they manifest?
 Did they sustain injury from their abstinence?
 How were they brought into the notice of king Nebuchadnezzar?
 What great trial of faith and constancy did Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego sustain?
 If Nebuchadnezzar was convinced of the power of Israel's God, did he humbly worship Him?
 What judgment befell him on account of his pride?
 Was he ever restored to reason?
 Who succeeded Nebuchadnezzar?
 What act of kindness did Evil-merodach perform?
 Who was his successor, and what was his character?
 In what war was Belshazzar engaged?
 What act of impiety was Belshazzar guilty of?
 How was his approaching doom announced?
 By what means did Cyrus effect an entrance into Babylon?
 Into whose hands did the government of Babylon pass?
 To what great trial was Daniel exposed under king Darius?
 Did he maintain his constancy? and what was the issue?
 Who reigned after Darius?
 What did Cyrus do on behalf of the Jews?
 Had any prophet foretold this act of Cyrus?

and on the 12th day of the 1st month of the 2nd year of the reign of Cyrus, the Jews returned to Jerusalem.

PERIOD IX.

THE RETURN FROM CAPTIVITY.

I. THE REBUILDING OF THE TEMPLE.

From A.M. 3468, to about 3604.—From B.C. 536, to about 490.

WHEN Cyrus issued his proclamation, the principal men of the tribes of Judah, Levi and Benjamin returned, taking with them the vessels of the sanctuary, by permission of Cyrus. They all offered liberally towards the rebuilding of the temple; and as soon as they arrived at Jerusalem, Joshua, the high-priest, and Zerubbabel, the prince of the tribe of Judah, set up the altar, and offered the sacrifices, and kept the feasts, even before the temple was built.

As the work proceeded they had many adversaries, particularly the Samaritans, who, having some knowledge of the Jewish religion, wished to join the Jews in building the temple; and when this was declined, they contrived so to misrepresent the Jews to the court of Persia, that the building of the temple was put a stop to for fourteen years.

At length the prophets Haggai and Zechariah were sent to rouse and encourage the Jews to proceed, and

for they were too well contented to go on building houses for themselves, while the house of God laid waste. On account of this, God visited their land with barrenness; there was a scarcity both of corn and wine. The prophet Haggai exhorted them to be zealous for the Lord, and then to observe whether his blessing did not make them rich, even in a temporal sense. Both these prophets also encouraged them with the assurance that though the second temple would be outwardly less splendid than the former, it should be in reality much more glorious, as the great Messiah should enter it. The work again went on vigorously, but fresh opposition was excited. False and unkind reports were sent to Persia, and it was represented that the Jews acted without authority in building the temple. This led Darius, the new king of Persia, to search for the decree of Cyrus, which they said they had received. On finding it he renewed and enlarged it, and even compelled those who had opposed the work to help it forward. The temple was at length happily completed, and a joyful feast held at its dedication.

The Jews still went on building the city and walls of Jerusalem, but had much opposition to contend with; and, in the early part of the reign of Ahasuerus, (or Artaxerxes Longimanus,) a decree was issued to forbid the progress of the work. Ezra i.—vi. But Providence was working in favour of the persecuted Jews; and circumstances which seemed to have little connexion with them, or were hostile to them, were made subservient to their great advantage.

QUESTIONS.

- Who presided over the Jews on their return from captivity?
- Did they enter immediately on the exercises of religious worship?
- Did they meet any discouragement in building the temple?
- What prophets were sent to stimulate and encourage them?
- How did the new king, Darius, act when the Jews were misrepresented?
- By what king was a decree issued to forbid the building of the city?

II. ESTHER.

A. M. 3542, — B. C. 402.

At a splendid feast at the court of Persia, king Ahasuerus commanded his queen, Vashti, to come into his presence, which she refused. This so incensed the king, that she was divorced; and afterwards all the beautiful damsels were assembled for the king to choose a wife from among them.

He fixed on Esther, a Jewess, the niece of Mordecai, by whom she had been brought up. About this time, and very probably through Esther's influence, Ezra, the scribe, obtained leave of King Ahasuerus to go to Jerusalem, and teach Israel in the statutes of the Lord. Many of the chief priests and people who had hitherto continued in Babylon went with him, and they joined in reforming and regulating many things relating to the worship of God, and to the government of the people, especially in setting aside marriages with heathen women, which were contrary to the law of God. *Ezra vii. — x.*

Some time after the advancement of Esther, her kinsman, Mordecai, who had a post in the king's gate, was the means of detecting and defeating a conspiracy of two of the chamberlains to murder the king. The criminals were executed, and the affair written in the chronicles of the kingdom, but no reward was bestowed on Mordecai. He still sat in the gate, and was not known to be the queen's relation.

In course of time the king had a great favourite named Haman, a haughty ambitious man, but so great in his master's esteem that all the king's servants were commanded to reverence him — most likely to prostrate themselves before him in a kind of worship. Mordecai could not conscientiously do this; and Haman was so provoked at the omission, that he resolved to destroy the whole nation of the Jews in revenge. He persuaded the king that they were a seditious and dangerous people, and obtained the king's consent to their being put to death wherever they might be found in all the provinces of his vast empire. Haman was a superstitious as well as a cruel man, and he drew lots to fix on a favourable day on which to execute his horrid deed. "The lot is cast into the lap, but the whole disposal thereof is of the Lord;" and in this instance Providence signally interposed, by causing the day to fall at the distance of eleven months. During that time, Mordecai, having heard of the decree, stood before the palace gate in sackcloth and ashes. Esther sent to inquire the cause of his grief, and was informed of the bloody decree by which herself, and all her people, were sentenced to perish. Mordecai exhorted her to use her utmost influence with the king to avert this calamity, reminding her, that she, perhaps, was raised by divine Providence to her present elevation, in order that she might be the means of good to her nation; but that if she shrunk from pleading the cause of the oppressed Jews, God could work their deliverance by other means, but she would not be guiltless. One of the laws of Persia forbade any person, upon pain of death,

to approach the king unless he called for them; and as the king of late had taken very little notice of Esther, there was reason to fear he might be greatly incensed should she appear uncalled in his presence. However, she and all the Jews fasted and prayed, and putting her trust in God, she ventured into the presence of the king. The God of Israel inclined the heart of the king towards her. He held out the golden sceptre, which indicated forgiveness and kindness, and he promised to grant her any request that she might present. She went no farther, at first, than to request that the king and Haman would come to a banquet which she had prepared. They did so, and again the king desired her to offer her request. She desired that they would come again to her banquet the next day. Haman was proud of the honour done him; but his malignant heart sickened when he saw Mordecai sitting at the king's gate. He told his wife and family that all his riches and honours could yield him no satisfaction until he had crushed this poor but independent man. See what a tormentor dwells in the bosom of a proud and spiteful man! His wife advised him not to delay the destruction of Mordecai to the day appointed for the general massacre, but to erect a gallows, and get leave from the king to execute Mordecai immediately.

On that night the king could not sleep; nor could music, or any other diversion, soothe his mind. He desired to have the chronicles of the kingdom read to him. The reader was providentially directed to the record of Mordecai saving the king's life. On this the king inquired what reward had been given him, and, finding nothing had been done, he was eager to repair the neglect, and demanded the attendance of some of his courtiers very early in the morning. Haman was very early there, intending to get the warrant for Mordecai's destruction; but, before he could propose that business, the king asked what he could think of to be conferred on the man whom the king delighted to honour. Haman, flattering himself that there was no man whom the king would so much delight to honour as himself, proposed that the person should be dressed in the king's robes, seated on the king's horse, and conducted through the city in splendid procession; one of the nobles proclaiming before him,—This is the man whom the king delights to honour. Haman was immediately directed to do all this for the object of his cruel hatred! Having done it, he went to his house gloomy and sick at heart. At the banquet the king again pressed Esther to offer her request. She therefore implored

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for her own life, and that of her people, and pointed at Haman as the cruel enemy who had put them in peril. Haman's downfall was speedy and complete. The king ordered him to be immediately executed on the very gallows he had raised for Mordecai, and Mordecai was raised to the same greatness from which Haman had fallen. But the decree was still in force, for (like that of Darius, p. 142) it was a law of the Medes and Persians, which, however foolish and unjust, must not be changed. Esther, therefore, obtained permission for the Jews to defend themselves, and to seize the spoil of any who should attempt to injure them. So one decree set against another, made the first of no effect. But on the appointed day, the Jews, aided by the rulers, who were in fear of Mordecai now he was in power, avenged themselves upon their enemies, and Haman's ten sons were hanged at the request of Esther. Thus was it made evident that "Verily, there is a reward for the righteous; verily, there is a God that judgeth in the earth." From that time the Jews observed an annual feast called Purim, or *lots*, in remembrance of the wonderful deliverance then afforded to their nation.

QUESTIONS.

- What circumstances led to the exaltation of Esther?
- What was her nation and parentage?
- What was the time and object of Ezra's going to Jerusalem?
- In what way was Mordecai, the uncle of Esther, serviceable to the king?
- Who among the courtiers of Ahasuerus was the great enemy of the Jews?
- What so greatly enraged Haman against Mordecai?
- What revenge did Haman take?
- Why was the execution of the decree so long deferred?
- Why was Esther afraid to apply to her husband in this distress?
- When Esther ventured in, how was she received?
- In what manner did she proceed with her application?
- What particular circumstance occurred the night after Esther's first banquet?
- What honour was shewn to Mordecai, and who was employed to render it?
- What took place at Esther's second banquet?
- What signal retribution was rendered to Haman?
- How was the decree against the Jews reversed?
- How was the remembrance of this deliverance perpetuated?

III. NEHEMIAH.

A. M. 3559. — B. C. 445.

Nehemiah was cup-bearer to Ahasuerus, the husband of Esther. He was a man eminent for attachment to the cause

of God and of his country. Having heard that the walls of Jerusalem were broken down, and its gates burned with fire, his heart was greatly distressed, and he wept, and prayed, and fasted before the God of Israel. The king observed his grief, and gave him permission to visit the land of his fathers. He went as Tirshatha, or governor of the province, and had leave to obtain of the keepers of the king's forests whatever timber was required to repair the city. In this good work he was mightily opposed, especially by Sanballat, Tobiah, and Geshem. But the Lord endued him with resolution and perseverance, and prospered the work of his hands, so that the design in time was accomplished, and the city again peopled. Nehemiah remained as governor about twelve or thirteen years, during which time he reformed many abuses in civil affairs, and promoted the sacred observances of religion, which, in the unsettled state of things, had been very sadly neglected.

Nehemiah occasionally returned to his duties at the Persian court, and was absent from Jerusalem for some years together. During one of these long absences, very flagrant abuses had crept in; most likely the reading of the law had been neglected, and then the people grew very slack in their obedience to it; the temple had been profaned by admitting to a residence in it Tobiah, the well known enemy of the Jews; the Levites were defrauded of their maintenance; the Sabbath was grossly violated, and awfully profaned; and both the priests and people had formed unlawful marriages; among these, the grandson of Eliashib, the high-priest, had married a daughter of Sanballat. Against these abuses, the prophet Malachi testified. He prophesied between the years 433 and 428 before Christ, and closed his writings some years later, with a distinct prophecy of the coming of the Messiah, and of his forerunner, John the Baptist. His prophecies close the Old Testament. When Nehemiah returned, he resolutely resisted and corrected these flagrant breakers of the law, and continued zealously to promote the true worship of God and the best interests of the people. Nehemiah.

QUESTIONS.

What office did Nehemiah hold?

What was his character?

What permission did he obtain from the king?

By whom was Nehemiah opposed?

Did he yield to discouragements?

How long did Nehemiah remain at Jerusalem?

For what purpose did he return to Persia?

Did he ever go back to Jerusalem?

What abuses had crept in during his absence?

What prophet testified against these abuses?

Did Nehemiah correct them?

What is the closing prediction of the Old Testament?

CONNECTING HISTORY BETWEEN THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENT.

The sacred writings carry the history of the Jews no farther than the book of Nehemiah, but from several writers, both Jewish and heathen, we are enabled to collect some authentic particulars of their history after that period, and of the state of affairs at the time of the coming of Christ.

In the book of Nehemiah mention is made of great corruptions in the time of Eliashib, the high-priest. Tobiah, an *unproselyted Ammonite, and great enemy of the Jews, was admitted to dwell in the temple; and the grandson of Eliashib, (named Manasseh), married a daughter of Sanballat, another great opposer of the Jews. When Nehemiah returned he expelled these profane intruders, and Manasseh went to his father-in-law, and persuaded him to build a temple on Mount Gerizim, where worship was carried on in imitation of that at Jerusalem, and in which Manasseh was made high-priest. This was the origin of that deadly hatred subsisting between the Jews and the Samaritans, which was carried to such an undue extent, and which prevailed even in the time of our Lord. See John iv.

When Ezra and Nehemiah were dead, the Jews were governed by their own high-priests under the authority of the kings of Persia. About three hundred and thirty years before Christ, the Persian empire was overturned by Alexander the Great, king of Macedon, in Greece. This mighty conqueror subdued almost the whole of the known world, and established the Grecian empire, the third of those predicted in vision to Daniel. Dan. vii.

The inhabitants of Tyre, depending chiefly on commerce, were wont to procure their supplies of corn from Palestine, which was altogether an agricultural country. When Alexander was besieging Tyre, he, too, applied for provisions for his army; but the Jews, having vowed allegiance to Persia, refused to supply the enemies of that empire. Alexander was greatly enraged at this refusal, and, having conquered Tyre, hastened to pour his vengeance on *

Jewish people. In this extremity, they besought the Divine guidance and protection, and Jaddua, the high-priest, in a vision of the night, was directed to go forth, and meet the conqueror arrayed in his pontifical garments, and attended by the priests and people. On beholding this procession Alexander was struck with profound awe, and declared that while in his own country, and deliberating about his expedition to Persia, he had seen the very person of Jaddua in the same dress, and was encouraged by him to proceed, with an assurance that God would be his guide, and would give him the empire of Persia. After this, Jaddua took Alexander to the temple, and shewed him the prophecies of Daniel, which intimated that Persia would be overthrown by a Grecian king. In consequence of all this, Alexander shewed great favour to the Jews, and granted them the full exercise of their laws and religion.

When Alexander had conquered Egypt, he built the city of Alexandria, and there settled multitudes of Jews, on whom he bestowed the same privileges as his Macedonian subjects. Having achieved his mighty conquests, he died in the twelfth year of his reign; all his family were murdered, and his empire divided among his four generals. Palestine and Syria had formerly been given to Laomedon, but were now obtained by Ptolemy Lagus. The Jews (under Onias the son of Jaddua) having sworn allegiance to Laomedon, refused to submit to Ptolemy, in consequence of which he led his army into Judea, took the city of Jerusalem, and carried away 100,000 Jews to Egypt, where, however, they were kindly treated, and even put in places of trust. During the reign of this Ptolemy, died Simon the Just, high-priest of the Jews, son of Onias, and grandson of Jaddua. He was an eminently just and holy man, the last of what the Jews called the great synagogue, consisting of 120 elders, beginning with Ezra, whose great care and study were to make a true collection of the Holy Scriptures, and to publish them accurately to the people. Simon is generally supposed to have completed this great work.

Ptolemy Philadelphus succeeded his father Ptolemy Lagus, on the throne of Egypt. He was friendly to the Jews, and a great patron of literature. He caused the Hebrew Scriptures to be translated into Greek; this is called the Septuagint version, and was usually quoted by our Lord and his apostles.

Another Ptolemy (called Philopater,) was profane and tyrannical. He attempted to thrust his way into the

**holiest of all*, and, being resisted by the high-priest, he deprived the Jews of their privileges, and cast many of them to be devoured by wild beasts; but the furious beasts forbore to hurt the Jews, and destroyed their enemies.

After many changes in government, Syria and Palestine came under the dominion of Antiochus. He befriended the Jews, and restored their privileges. He was succeeded by his son Seleucus Philopater. During this reign the governor of the temple having quarrelled with the high-priest, treacherously gave information of the treasures deposited in the temple, and Heliodorus, the king's treasurer, was sent to seize them; but on entering the temple the Syrians were struck with such terror as compelled them to abandon the attempt.

Soon afterwards, Heliodorus assassinated his master, and attempted to usurp the throne. But Antiochus, the brother of Seleucus, came from Athens and defeated him. This Antiochus was the "*vile person*" predicted of by Daniel. He called himself Epiphanes, or *the illustrious*, but others more justly called him Epimanes, or *the madman*. He deposed the good high-priest Onias, and sold the office first to one, and then to another, as he could get most money for it. During his absence, a false report was spread of his death. The Jews greatly rejoiced at it, and attempted to restore the former high-priest. But Antiochus came upon them, took Jerusalem by storm, slew many thousand persons, and sold many thousands for slaves. He also plundered the temple of its gold and silver furniture, entered into the ** holy of holies*, and sacrificed a sow, in contempt of the sacrifices of God. About two years afterwards, he sent an army to destroy Jerusalem, to slay all the men, and take the women and children for slaves. These orders were executed on a Sabbath-day, when the people were assembled for public worship. The few who escaped by flight or concealment, afterwards endured violent persecution, for the furious king commanded that all his subjects should conform to the religion of the Greeks. He compelled the Jews to submit to idolatrous rites, and put to cruel deaths many who refused. At last he caused all sacrifices to the God of Israel to cease, did all he could to profane the temple, set up the image of an idol there, burnt every copy of the law that could be found, and in every way opposed every religious feeling and observance of the Jews. At this time a venerable old man named Eleazer suffered; also, seven brethren, whose admirable constancy is related in the ** Apocrypha*, and to whom

St. Paul alludes in his Epistle to the Hebrews. (Heb. xi. 35—38.) This suspension of religious worship in the temple continued, as the prophet Daniel had foretold, for three years and a half, after which, a brave and noble family (Mattathias and his descendants) fought valiantly and successfully for their civil and religious rights. Judas Maccabeus (the son of Mattathias) recovered, and purified the temple, and restored the worship of the true God, 165 years before Christ. On hearing of this, Antiochus vowed vengeance against the whole nation of the Jews; but while he was boastfully threatening to extirpate them, he was cut off by the dreadful judgments of God.

Judea was now governed by the Maccabean princes, and enjoyed for a short time great prosperity. But afterwards, the Roman empire, having prevailed over that of Greece in Egypt and Syria, soon gained ascendancy over the Jews. In the reign of the Roman emperor Pompey, sixty-three years before Christ, the Jews were made tributary to the Romans, though they were still governed by their own princes of the Asmonean family. The last of that race was deposed by Herod the Great. [B. C. 37.] Herod was an Idumean by birth, but of Jewish extraction, and had been appointed king of the Jews by the Romans. The Jews were still governed by their own high-priests, but Herod in the course of his long reign greatly diminished their power.

Herod was succeeded by his son Archelaus, [B. C. 3.] who conducted himself ill, and was therefore banished by Augustus Cæsar, and the Jewish dominions reduced to the form of a Roman province. [A. D. * 8.]

Now Jacob on his death bed had predicted that the government should not wholly depart from the tribe of Judah until Shiloh (or the Messiah) should come. Gen. xlix. 10. At this period it departed, and has never been restored; and just at this period Jesus Christ came,—one proof, among many more, that He was indeed the true Messiah.

QUESTIONS.

At what point of the Jewish history does the Old Testament close? Do we know nothing more of the Jews from that time till the coming of Christ?

From what sources do we derive our information?

What was the origin of the Samaritan temple as opposed to that at Jerusalem?

By whom were the Jews governed after the death of Nehemiah and Ezra?

Who overturned the Persian empire?

How did the Jews offend him?

By what means was Alexander reconciled to the Jews?

How did he treat them afterwards?

Who governed Judea after the death of Alexander?

What distinguished elder of the Jews died in the reign of Ptolemy Lagus?

What great work is he supposed to have completed?

How did Ptolemy Philadelphus treat the Jews?

What was the character of Ptolemy Philopater?

What profane act did he attempt?

How did he resent the interference of the high-priest who prevented his entering the holy place?

How did Antiochus the governor of Syria treat the Jews?

What occurred in the reign of his son Seleucus Philopater?

By whom was this prince assassinated?

Who succeeded Seleucus?

What was his character?

Had any of the prophets referred to him?

Of what horrible profanity was he guilty?

What cruel persecutions did he inflict?

By whom was he successfully opposed?

What was his end?

How was Judea governed after the death of Antiochus Epiphanes?

What empire prevailed against that of Greece?

Under what Roman emperor did Judea become tributary?

Who was governor of Judea when Jesus Christ was born?

Who succeeded Herod the Great?

What took place in the government of Judea when Archelaus was banished?

What particular prophecy was thus fulfilled?

How does this tend to prove that Jesus was the promised Messiah?

THE NEW TESTAMENT.

THE great distinguishing feature of the New Testament history is, that it records the exact fulfilment of Old Testament *predictions, especially such as relate to the appearance and character of the promised Messiah. The narrative of the *evangelists is properly a life of Christ; but they do not all begin it at the same period. The *evangelist John begins by asserting that Christ from the beginning was one with God; but that he took on Him the form and nature of man in order that He might become the Saviour of men. John i. The evangelists Matthew and Luke give us some particulars of his birth and early life. Mark commences with the ministry of John the Baptist.

I. THE BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD OF CHRIST.

A. M. 4000.

Malachi, the last of the Old Testament prophets, distinctly foretold the coming of the Messiah; and also that of one who should go before to prepare his way. The same had been foretold by the prophet Isaiah, (Is. xl.; Mal. iv.) When the fulness of time drew nigh, John the Baptist was sent before to prepare the way for Christ. The parents of John were aged people, and did not expect to be blessed with children; but an angel was sent to Zacharias (who was a priest) as he ministered in the temple, to tell him that his wife Elizabeth should bear a son, who was to be the *forerunner of the Messiah. Zacharias could hardly believe this declaration; and as a rebuke to his incredulity, and at the same time as a *confirmation of the message, the angel told him that he should be dumb until the time when these things were accomplished. Accordingly, when Zacharias came forth to the people he could not speak, and it was evident to all of them that he had seen a vision. In due time the child was born; and as soon as he

was named John, according to the word of the angel, the speech of Zacharias was restored, and he praised God for his faithfulness and great goodness. Meanwhile the same angel was sent to a virgin named Mary, who dwelt at Nazareth, and who was descended from the family of David. She was espoused to a carpenter of the same town, named Joseph, who also was of the family of David. The angel told Mary that she was to be honoured and blessed above all women, for that in a most wonderful manner she should become the mother of the promised Messiah, who was indeed the Son of God. Mary did not hesitate, like Zacharias, but humbly said, "Behold the hand-maid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word." After this Mary visited Zacharias and Elizabeth, to whom she was related, and they joined in praising God.

An angel was also sent to tell Joseph that Mary, his espoused wife, should bear a son, whose name was to be called Jesus, because He should save his people from their sins. Joseph then took Mary home to his house.

About this time the inhabitants of all the provinces of the Roman empire were required by Cæsar Augustus to enroll or register themselves at the places to which they belonged; thus acknowledging themselves subjects, and engaging to pay tribute to the Roman empire. The Jews were obliged to submit to this, and thus it was made plain that they had lost their own independent government, and that the time was come when it had been *predicted that the Messiah should appear. By this law Joseph was compelled to go to Bethlehem, the city of his ancestors; and by this means another prophecy was fulfilled, namely, that the Messiah should be born at Bethlehem. Micah v. 2. While Joseph and Mary remained at Bethlehem, they were forced to lodge in a stable, for the inn was crowded on account of so many persons coming on the same business; and there Mary brought forth her first-born son, and laid him in a manger. Thus did our Redeemer not only become man for our salvation, but entered life amidst circumstances of outward meanness and poverty. This should make us thankful for his condescension, and at the same time contented with the lot his providence assigns us. However poor we may be, we are surely as well off as He who was born in a stable and laid in a manger, and who afterwards had not where to lay his head; and as He stooped to share our meanness, if we are his followers, He will raise us to share his glory.

When Jesus was born, it was made known to some shep-

herds of Bethlehem, who were in the fields keeping their flocks. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the *glory of the Lord shone round about them; and the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold I bring you glad tidings of great joy, which shall be to you and to all people. For unto you is born this day a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." When the angel had told them where they would find this new-born Saviour, immediately a multitude of the heavenly host joined him in praising God, and saying "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will towards men." As soon as the angels departed, the shepherds hastened to Bethlehem, where they found the babe, and Mary and Joseph. They told many what the angel had said to them concerning this child, and then returned to their employment, praising God for the great things they had seen and heard.

When the child was circumcised on the eighth day, His name was called JESUS, to signify that He should save His people from their sins. At the time appointed by the law of Moses He was taken to the temple at Jerusalem to be presented to the Lord, and there a wonderful *testimony was borne to him by Simeon and Anna. Simeon was an eminently holy man, to whom it had been told by the Holy Ghost that he should not die until he had seen the promised Saviour. Anna was an aged prophetess, and both of them frequently visited the temple; but neither of them knew any thing particular about the birth of Jesus. Just at the time that the infant was brought to the temple, Simeon came there under the peculiar influence of the Holy Spirit, and taking the child in his arms, he said, "Lord now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace according to thy word, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation." He also foretold the sufferings which the Saviour should endure; and Anna also spake of him to those who were expecting and waiting for the promised Redeemer.

The birth of the Saviour of mankind was also made known to those in distant lands. For in the land called the East (comprehending Mesopotamia, Arabia, and Persia) the inhabitants had observed a new star which arose over the land of Judea, and which they were taught to believe indicated the birth of some great Prince or Ruler. Some of their *wise men therefore set out, and following the guidance of the star, came to the land of Judea. Herod was at this time the king; to him they proceeded, and inquired where they should find Him who was born king of the Jews, for

they had seen his star in the east, and were come to do him homage. On hearing this Herod was greatly terrified, for he thought the new-born infant would grow up to take away his dominion. He called together the scribes and the priests, and asked them where, according to their prophets, the Christ should be born. They told him at Bethlehem. He then desired the wise men, when they had found the infant, to come back and let him know, that he also might go and worship him; but his real intention was to kill him. But God saw the cruel purpose of his wicked heart, and defeated his malicious projects. On turning towards Bethlehem the wise men again saw the star going before them, until it stood over the place where the young child was. They immediately fell down and worshipped him, offering costly gifts, gold, *franckincence and *myrrh. They were then warned of God in a dream not to return to Herod at Jerusalem, but to go to their own country another way. Joseph and Mary also were warned to take the young child and flee into the land of Egypt, from the jealousy and rage of Herod. After waiting some time for the return of the sages, Herod was greatly enraged, and caused all the male infants in Bethlehem to be murdered, hoping by that means to insure the death of Him whom he regarded as his rival.

Soon afterwards Herod died, and his son Archelaus reigned in his stead. Joseph and Mary then returned to Judea, but dwelt at Nazareth in Galilee, and hence Jesus was often called a Nazarene, or Galilean; and the child grew, and gave early proofs of strength of mind and holy dispositions. When He was twelve years old He was taken by his parents to the feast of the *Passover at Jerusalem. On this occasion the child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem; so intent was He on the ordinances of devotion, and on the means of religious instruction. On being sought by his anxious parents, He was found sitting among the *doctors in the temple, hearing them expound the law, and asking of them explanations. If such humility and diligence were exemplified in the lovely child Jesus, they are surely becoming to all young persons who desire to follow His example, and wish, like Him, to grow in wisdom as in stature, and in favour both with God and man. After this Jesus returned with His parents to Nazareth, and was obedient to them, and dwelt with them in a retired situation; most likely assisting them in their daily labour. Matt. i. ii. Luke i. ii.

QUESTIONS.

What particular connexion is there between the Old Testament and the New?

Which of the evangelists says most about the divinity of our Saviour?

Who was the forerunner of Christ?

Who were his parents?

When an angel foretold the birth of John, did Zacharias readily believe it?

How was his incredulity reproved?

Who was the mother of Jesus Christ, and where did she reside?

Who was the supposed father of Christ?

Where was Christ born?

How came Joseph and Mary to be at Bethlehem?

To whom was the birth of Christ made known by angels?

Who visited Christ from a great distance? and what induced them to come?

Who attempted the life of Christ in his infancy?

How was Jesus preserved from the designs of Herod?

What is related of the childhood of Christ?

II. THE MINISTRY OF JOHN THE BAPTIST. THE TEMPTATION, AND FIRST PUBLIC MANIFESTATION OF CHRIST.

*A. D. 28.

John, the son of Zacharias and Elizabeth, dwelt with his parents in the wilderness of Judea. He was remarkable for early strength of mind, and superiority to the vanities and pleasures of youth. At about thirty years of age, he was sent forth to preach and proclaim to the people that they should repent, for the kingdom of heaven was at hand; that is, the promised *Messiah would shortly appear among them. As John went from place to place in the wilderness of Judea, his preaching excited much attention, and many were convinced of their need of repentance. When they asked him what they must do, he faithfully pointed out to them the necessity of inward holiness, and told them not to rely on their relation to Abraham (which the Jews were very apt to do), for that unless they possessed sincerity of heart, and manifested it by a consistent deportment, they would be rejected from the kingdom of their expected Messiah. Those who received his doctrine and professed repentance, were baptized by John in the river Jordan, as an emblem of the inward and outward purity required of them.

While John was thus engaged, Jesus himself came, and desired to be baptized of him. At first John hesitated to baptize one so vastly his superior; but Jesus explained to him

that it became Him to fulfil all righteousness, and to be exact in obedience to all the appointments of God, inasmuch as He was to set a perfect pattern to his people. Then John baptized Jesus; and as he came up out of the water, the heavens were opened, and the Spirit of God descended like a dove and rested on Him, and a voice from heaven said, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Thus the whole *Trinity combined to put honour on the ordinance of baptism; and our Lord, when He afterwards enjoined it on all his professed followers, commanded them to be baptized "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Matt..xxviii.

The time was now at hand for our Lord to enter on his public ministry. As soon, therefore, as He was baptized He retired into the wilderness for solitude and prayer, in prospect of his great and arduous work. And there He was tempted of the devil; we do not know in what form or manner the tempter appeared to him, or what expectations he could have of succeeding with the Son of God; but we are expressly taught two things, which afford us strong consolation and valuable instruction, viz. that Christ submitted to be in all points tempted like as we are, and hence that He knows how to exercise compassion and afford succour to those who are tempted; and that though, as God, He might in an instant have confounded the tempter and compelled him to retreat, He chose rather to resist temptation exactly in the way in which we are to resist it, namely, by "the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God," herein leaving us an example that we should follow in his steps.

When Jesus was hungry (for He had fasted forty days,) Satan tempted Him to distrust the providence of his heavenly Father, and to command the stones to be made bread; Jesus resisted this, saying, "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." Then he tempted Him to presumptuous reliance on a misquoted and misapplied promise of Scripture. It is written, that God will preserve his people in all their ways; 'Therefore,' says the tempter, 'cast thyself down this precipice, and say, If I am to be saved, I shall be saved.' Jesus again replied, "It is written, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." The devil then tempted Him to ambition, covetousness, and idolatry, by offering to give Him all the kingdoms of the world and all the glory of them, if He would fall down and worship him. But in all these temptations Jesus was more than conqueror over his adversary,

and if we, in his strength, use the same weapons, we have this encouraging declaration, "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you; draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you. The very God of peace shall shortly bruise Satan under your feet." When the devil was vanquished and had retreated, angels came and ministered unto Jesus; and though we see them not, they are ministering spirits sent forth to minister to the heirs of salvation.

During our Lord's absence in the wilderness, John the Baptist had repeatedly borne witness to Him as the true Messiah. When the preaching of John excited great notice, the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem, to ask him whether or not he were the Christ. He told them he was not; but that he was sent before to bear witness to Him. Shortly afterwards, as John was conversing with two of his disciples, he saw Jesus coming, and said, "Behold the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world," signifying that Christ was the true atonement, represented by the lambs, and other sacrifices daily offered in the temple. The disciples immediately became followers of Christ, and one of them, named Andrew, called his brother Simon, and said to him, We have found the Messiah! Simon believed his brother, and they went together to Jesus, who gave to Simon the name of Cephas or Peter, which signifies a stone. The next day Jesus called Philip, who was of the city of Bethsaida, and bade him follow Him. Philip invited his townsman Nathanael; but there was a great prejudice among the Jews against any who came out of Nazareth or Galilee. They were regarded as mean, despicable persons; Nathanael therefore said, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" Philip answered him, "Come and see." The best way to remove prejudice, is to make candid and impartial inquiry after truth. As Nathanael came, Jesus said, "Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile." Nathanael was astonished that Jesus should know any thing of him; still, when Jesus told him that he had seen him in a place of secret retirement, most likely engaged in acts of devotion—in a word, that He knew his whole character and heart, this convinced Nathanael that He must indeed be the Son of God, the King of Israel. Matt. iii. Mark i. Luke iii. iv. John i.

QUESTIONS.

What was the character of John?

What were the chief subjects of his preaching?

- What rite did he administer to those who professed repentance?
- As Jesus had no need of repentance, why did he come to be baptized?
- What honour was done to Christ at his baptism?
- Where did Christ go after his baptism?
- How long did he remain in the wilderness?
- What befell him there?
- In what manner did he resist temptation?
- When Jesus returned from the wilderness, what testimony did John bear to him?
- Who were the first disciples that Christ called?
- What was the character of Nathaniel?

III. THE MINISTRY OF CHRIST CONTINUED.

From this time Jesus went about with His disciples preaching the gospel and instructing all who came to Him. His fame soon spread abroad, for He taught with astonishing wisdom, such as no other teacher had discovered. He knew the very heart, and exactly adapted His discourses, so as to reprove or console those whom He addressed. Beside this, He wrought many *miracles, which tended to convince those who beheld them that He was indeed sent from God, and that His doctrines were true, and such as demanded attention and obedience. The first miracle that Jesus wrought was at Cana in Galilee, where He was at a marriage feast with His mother and His disciples. The parties were poor, and had not sufficient for the entertainment of the guests; but Jesus directed the servants to fill six large stone vessels with water, and then to draw some of it and hand to the guests. They did so, and it proved to be wine of most excellent quality.

Soon after this Jesus went to the feast of the Passover at Jerusalem. The state of religion among the Jews at this time was very corrupt and degenerate. Outward forms were regarded much more than inward purity, and almost every thing connected with the worship of God was made a matter of gain and merchandise. When Jesus entered the temple, He found the *outer court, where the Gentiles were allowed to worship, converted into a market for the sale of beasts and birds for sacrifice. Jesus sharply reproved this profanity and worldly mindedness, and with a scourge of small cords He drove out all the buyers and sellers, and overthrew their tables or counters. They must have been convinced in their consciences that He acted by divine authority, or they would not have submitted thus to be turned out by one man whom by their numbers they could

easily have overpowered, had He been no more than he appeared to be.

While Jesus was in Jerusalem, a *Pharisee, named Nicodemus, one of the rulers and teachers of the Jews, having heard of the fame of his miracles, came by night to converse with Him. Jesus declared to Nicodemus that except a man be born again, he cannot see, or enter into the kingdom of God. Nicodemus could not understand this; for though the Jews believed that a *Messiah would come, they quite mistook the nature of His kingdom, and expected that it would consist in worldly pomp and greatness; but Jesus explained to Nicodemus that it is a spiritual kingdom, and that those who share its privileges are made new creatures by the power of the Holy Spirit. Of His renewing and purifying influence on the heart, water in baptism is an *emblem or *figure. Jesus told Nicodemus of the great love of God to a sinful and perishing world, in that He had given his own Son to be lifted up on the cross as the brazen serpent was lifted up by Moses in the wilderness, (see p. 71), that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life; but added, that the most awful guilt and condemnation must rest on those who reject such a merciful provision.

After this Jesus and his disciples were in the land of Judea; and there He baptized, or caused his disciples to baptize, many who believed on Him as the Messiah. The disciples of John complained to their Master that they feared his popularity would be eclipsed by that of Jesus; but John nobly replied, that he wished it to be so; that he was sent to draw the attention of men to Jesus as the Christ, and having done so, he was very willing to retire into the shade. Soon after this, John was cast into prison by Herod, the king or *tetrarch of Galilee, who at one time was a great admirer of John's preaching; but when he ventured to reprove his sin in having taken the wife of his brother Philip, became enraged against him, and shut him up in prison. As the disciples of Jesus increased, the Pharisees, who hated his doctrine, became more and more enraged against Him, and began to plot his destruction. Jesus knew their intentions; and as He would not give Himself up to them until the appointed time was come, He returned to Galilee, and continued chiefly to travel about in those parts.

On his way to Galilee, Jesus had to pass through Samaria. While his disciples were gone to buy food, He sat resting on a well, and fell into conversation with a Samaritan woman,

who came to draw water. The Jews and Samaritans were bitter enemies ; so much so, that they refused to perform for each other the commonest offices of humanity. This woman almost refused to give a draught of water to a weary stranger, whose dress bespoke him a Jew. But Jesus told her of the blessings of the gospel, which are as living water to the thirsty soul, and which He would give to all who ask them of Him. At length He told the woman that He was the Messiah, whom both the Jews and the Samaritans expected. He also told her of her own sinful conduct in such a way as struck her heart and conscience with conviction. She believed his word, and hastened to call her neighbours to come and see and hear for themselves. They did so ; and many of the Samaritans believed on Him there.

As Jesus proceeded on His way, a nobleman met Him, and entreated Him to come down to Capernaum, and heal his only son, who was at the point of death. Jesus did not go with him, because his power was all-sufficient, and his presence universal ; and he wished to reprove the spirit that would dictate as to the express manner in which his mercy should be conferred ; but He told the nobleman to go home, for his son's life should be spared. The man believed the word of Jesus ; and as he went he met his servants, who told him that the fever had entirely left his son at the very time in which Jesus had spoken the healing word.

Jesus was in the constant habit, on the Sabbath-days, of attending the *synagogue, where the Jews met for religious worship and instruction. At the synagogue at Nazareth, he read a portion of the prophecies of Isaiah, (Is. lxiii. 1—3,) and said that this Scripture was fulfilled in his preaching the Gospel. At first the people were struck with admiration at his words ; but afterwards they took offence, and attempted to cast Him down from the hill on which their city was built. But Jesus passed away from them, and went to Capernaum, where He taught in the synagogue. He often also went into the fishing boats on the lake of Galilee, and preached to a multitude assembled on the shore. There our Lord called Peter and Andrew, James and John, entirely to give up their worldly callings, and stately to follow Him, promising that He would make them fishers of men ; that is, that they should attract and save many souls by the preaching of the Gospel. As a pledge of this, He caused them to catch at once a vast quantity of fishes, though they had toiled all the night before and had caught nothing.

When our Lord was on earth, He sometimes met with

persons who were possessed with devils. It seems as if this dreadful calamity was permitted at that particular time, to shew the Redeemer's power over infernal spirits. In the synagogue at Capernaum there was a man thus afflicted. Jesus commanded the foul spirit to depart, and it was constrained to obey Him, and to acknowledge Him as the Holy One of God. On his return to the house of his disciple Peter, Jesus found Peter's wife's mother sick with a violent fever. He spoke the word, and immediately the fever left her, and she was restored to health and activity. The fame of his miracles spread abroad, and the house was surrounded by crowds of persons with all manner of diseases ; and He laid his hands on them and healed them all. But, while Jesus thus went about doing good, He did not forget the work of personal piety. He retired a great while before day into a desert place to pray : thus teaching us the duty of maintaining at once holy communion with God, and active benevolence among men. Matt. iv. Mark i. Luke iv. Johnii. iii. iv.

QUESTIONS.

- What works were wrought by Jesus, which proved that God had sent him ?
- What was the first miracle, and where was it wrought ?
- What abuse did Christ correct in the temple ?
- What particular discourse had Christ with a ruler of the Jews ?
- What great truths of the gospel did Christ teach Nicodemus ?
- What befell John the Baptist about this time ?
- To what province was Christ's ministry chiefly confined ?
- With whom did Christ converse at Jacob's well ?
- What miracle was wrought as Christ went down to Galilee ?
- Did he go to Capernaum, as the nobleman requested ?
- What miracle was wrought in the synagogue at Capernaum ?
- What miracle was wrought in Peter's house ?
- For what purpose did Christ retire into the desert ?

IV. THE MINISTRY OF CHRIST CONTINUED.

While thus passing through Galilee, Jesus ascended one of the mountains, and addressed to a vast multitude that important discourse called the Sermon on the Mount. It was designed to correct many errors into which the Jews had fallen, and to which all mankind are prone, of substituting outward observances for inward purity. It also instructs us in the duty of prayer ; it shews the vast importance of building our hopes on a good foundation ; and the duty of Christians to lead lives of consistent and exemplary holiness.

When Christ came down from the mountain, He was applied to by a poor creature suffering under the dreadful disease of leprosy. He fell at his feet, and said, "Lord, if thou wilt thou canst make me clean." Jesus answered him, "I will; be thou clean:" and immediately his leprosy departed from him. This disease was never cleansed by human means. The cure was always sought immediately from God, and the priests were appointed to judge of it. Accordingly, Jesus told the poor man to go and shew himself to the priests, that they might attest his cure; and to offer the gifts appointed by the law of Moses.

At Capernaum, a *paralytic was brought by his friends to the house where Jesus was. Many *Pharisees and *doctors of the law were in the house with Jesus, and the entrances were crowded by persons who came to hear his discourses. The friends of the poor man, therefore, carried him to the top of the house, and let him down through the open roof into the room where Jesus was. (The roofs of the Jewish houses were flat, and made to open somewhat in the manner in which carriages among us are constructed, so as to open or close at pleasure.) Jesus observed the faith of the sufferer and his friends, and said, "Son, thy sins be forgiven thee." Sin is the cause of all our sufferings. The great concern is to have our sins forgiven, and our natures cleansed; then we may hope for a world where the inhabitant shall no more say, "I am sick." When the *Pharisees and *Scribes heard Jesus speak of forgiving sins, they accused Him of blasphemy; "for who," said they, "can forgive sins but God only?" This is very true; but Jesus is God—therefore He can forgive sins. None but God can read the thoughts of the heart; but Jesus read their thoughts—therefore He is God. None but God can in an instant cure a lame, helpless, paralytic; but Jesus did this, and therefore He is God. Jesus, *perceiving the thoughts of their hearts*, said unto them, "Whether is it easier to say, *Thy sins be forgiven thee*, or to say, *Rise up and walk?*" But, to prove that though He was then the Son of man on earth, He was nevertheless possessed of divine power; He said to the sick man, "Arise, take up thy bed, and go to thine house;" and immediately he did so; and the people who beheld it glorified God, and said, "We have seen strange things to-day."

The miracles of Christ on the bodies of men were emblems of the effects of his Gospel on the minds of men. Sin is like a disease. Sinners are polluted like *lepers,—helpless like *paralytics, and, under the influence of Satan, like those

deranged and possessed. But the Gospel, under the Holy Spirit's influence, is the means of cleansing the heart and restoring to soundness, health, and activity. These remarks should be borne in mind by the reader as applicable to the miracles in general.

About this time Jesus called Matthew (or Levi), a *Galilean and a *publican, to be one of his constant followers. Matthew afterwards became an *apostle and an *evangelist.

The year following Jesus again went to the feast of the *Passover at Jerusalem. In the sheep-market of that city was a pool, called Bethesda (or mercy), from a miraculous circumstance connected with it, viz. that at a certain season an angel came down and troubled the waters; and whoever first stepped in, after the troubling of the waters, was made whole of whatever disease he had. In consequence, there were always many afflicted sufferers waiting in hope of obtaining a cure. As Jesus passed, He saw a poor cripple, who had been thirty-eight years afflicted; and having asked him if he desired to be made whole, commanded him to take up his bed and go home. Immediately his strength returned, and he took up his couch and went his way.

This was on the Sabbath-day; and the Jews cavilled, saying, "It is not lawful to do so on the Sabbath;" and they persecuted Jesus, and sought to slay Him. But Jesus on this and on several other occasions, taught that it was lawful to shew mercy on the Sabbath-day; and also that his works in general abundantly proved that He had full authority from God for all that He did. Matt. v. Mark i. ii. Luke v. John v.

QUESTIONS.

- What discourse was delivered on a mountain of Galilee?
- What particular truths does it inculcate?
- What miracle was wrought when Christ came down from the mountain?
- What particulars were connected with the cure of the paralytic at Capernaum?
- What great doctrines were especially taught by this miracle?
- What do miracles in general figuratively represent?
- What miracle was wrought at the pool of Bethesda?
- What offence did the Jews take at this miracle?

V. THE MINISTRY OF CHRIST CONTINUED.

After the feast Jesus returned to Galilee. On the way, *the disciples being hungry, plucked some ears of corn, and ate them.* Even for this the captious Pharisees charged them

with breaking the Sabbath. By way of reproving them, Jesus, on entering the synagogue, and seeing a man with a withered hand, asked the Pharisees, whether it was lawful to heal on the Sabbath-day : and, without waiting for their reply, bade the man stretch forth his hand, and immediately it became whole as the other. At this the Pharisees were enraged and confounded, and took counsel to destroy Jesus ; but He went away, and cured many of their diseases.

About this time Christ ordained and sent forth twelve *apostles to preach the Gospel of his kingdom. Their names were Simon Peter and Andrew his brother ; James and John, the sons of Zebedee ; Philip, and Bartholomew ; Thomas and Matthew (or Levi), James the son of Alphaeus, and Jude his brother (sometimes called Lebbeus, and Thaddeus) ; Simon Zelotes the Canaanite, and Judas Iscariot, who afterwards betrayed Jesus. When Jesus sent them forth, He told them they would have many hardships and difficulties to encounter ; but promised them needful support, protection, and assistance.

At Capernaum, Jesus was applied to by a Roman *centurion, with a request that He would heal his servant. This centurion was distinguished by condescending sympathy for his servant, and by humility and faith in his application to the Saviour. He had so deep a sense of his own unworthiness, that he presumed not to come himself to Jesus at first, but begged the Jews to intercede for him ; and he had so lively a conviction of the power of Jesus, that he did not (like the nobleman) urge him to *come* and heal ; but said, "Speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed." Jesus greatly commended his spirit, and granted his request.

As Jesus entered Nain, a small place in that neighbourhood, he met the funeral of a young man, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow. Jesus had compassion on her, and said to her, "Weep not." Then commanding those who carried the corpse to stand still, He took the young man by the hand, and bade him arise, and restored him alive to his mother. When the prophets Elijah and Elisha miraculously raised to life those that had been dead, they prayed to God to exert that power which they well knew they did not possess : but Jesus commanded the dead to arise ; for He had all power in Himself. The miracles that He wrought prove that he came from God ; His manner of working them proves that He is God. The hour is coming, when his voice shall raise *all* the dead.

John the Baptist was now in prison (see p. 162.) His disciples often visited him there, and asked his sentiments of Jesus. John himself had no doubt whatever of his being the true Messiah; but for the instruction and satisfaction of these disciples, he sent them to Jesus himself. They came to Him, and said, "Art thou He that should come, (*i. e.* the Messiah,) or are we to expect another?"—Jesus gave them no direct reply; but in the same hour cured many of their diseases: and then said, "Go and tell John what you have seen and heard. The blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the Gospel preached unto them. John would naturally turn his disciples to the prophecies, (such as Isa. xxxv.) in which is foretold that the Messiah should do such things as these. No other person had done or could do them; therefore Jesus must be the Messiah.

As Jesus went through the cities of Galilee, where most of his mighty works had been done, He lamented the obstinacy and perverseness of the people who continued to despise him, and said it would be more tolerable for the heathen in the judgment day, than for those who had heard the Gospel and disregarded it. This stands as a warning for us who have such opportunities of learning and knowing our duty. Let us beware that we do not neglect it to our own condemnation and ruin.

Our Lord was once invited to dine in the house of a *Pharisee, named Simon. While there, a woman, who had been a great sinner, but who had been encouraged to come to the Redeemer, in humble penitence, prostrated herself before Jesus, washed his feet with her tears, wiped them with the hair of her head, and anointed them with perfumed ointment. The Pharisees in general trusted in themselves, that they were righteous, and despised others. When Simon saw that Jesus suffered this woman thus to approach Him, he suspected that he could not be a prophet, or He would have commanded such a sinful woman to depart from his presence. But Jesus spoke a *parable to correct his mistake: If a very rich man had two debtors, one of whom owed him many pounds, and the other only a few pence; and if the creditor should freely forgive them both, neither would have any thing to boast of; but he who had most forgiven, would feel himself laid under the strongest obligations. So, as all men are sinners against God, and can have no hope but from His free mercy, those who are most deeply humbled on account of their own guilt, will feel the strongest emotions of love

and gratitude for pardoning mercy. This stands on record, at once to humble the most virtuous, and to encourage the most deeply penitent. Matt. viii. x. xii. Mark ii. iii. Luke vi. vii.

QUESTIONS.

Whither did Christ go after the feast of tabernacles?

What miracle did Christ perform in the *synagogue on the Sabbath-day?

Whom did Jesus send forth, and for what purpose?

What were the names of the twelve *apostles?

For what purpose did a Roman *centurion apply to Christ?

Wherein were his humility and faith discovered?

What miracle was performed at Nain?

Where was John the Baptist at this time?

For what purpose did he send his disciples to Jesus?

Why did Christ lament over the cities of Galilee?

What happened when Christ dined at the house of Simon, a *Pharisee?

What was taught by the parable of the two debtors?

VI. THE MINISTRY OF CHRIST CONTINUED.

When Jesus next went through the towns of Galilee, he cured a poor creature possessed of a devil, and who was both deaf and dumb. The common people reasoned among themselves, that certainly this must be the Son of God, but the spiteful *Pharisees *blasphemously accused Jesus of casting out devils, by agreement with the chief of the devils.

One time, when the *Pharisees demanded some special sign from heaven, that "He was the Christ," Jesus told them they should have no further sign than the miracles he was continually working, except that as Jonah, the prophet, after being cast into the sea and swallowed by a fish, was raised again to preach to the people of Nineveh, so the Son of Man, after being dead and buried, should rise again, and shame their unbelief. Jesus also told them, that the people of Nineveh, who repented at the preaching of Jonah, and the queen of Sheba, who came to hear the wisdom of Solomon, would rise against them in the judgment-day, and condemn them who had rejected a greater than either Jonah or Solomon. While Jesus was speaking, one of the company said, "How blessed was the mother who had borne and nourished such a Son!" but Jesus said, "Those rather are blessed who hear the word of God, and keep it." At this time Jesus spoke many instructive *parables, which he afterwards explained to his disciples,—such as the wheat and tares—the p

growth of corn—the leaven—the pearl of great price, and the net of fishes.

As Jesus went towards the lake or sea of Galilee, which he was about to cross, several persons came and professed a wish to follow Him; but each made some excuse for delay, which proved him not sincere; and Jesus told them, that none would be his accepted disciples but those who willingly relinquish whatever may stand in the way of obeying his commands. As Jesus and his disciples crossed the lake, there arose a mighty tempest; the disciples were filled with alarm, but Jesus was asleep. They awoke Him, and said, "Master, carest thou not that we perish?" Jesus reproved them for their want of faith, and then rebuked the winds and the waves, and said—"Peace! be still!" and immediately there was a great calm. When they reached the other side of the lake, there met Jesus a man possessed of a devil, or indeed of many devils,—so fierce that no means could tame or confine the subject of this terrible malady. The devils were constrained to acknowledge Jesus; and at his command to quit their hold of the poor creature, who immediately became calm and rational, and was found sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed, and in his right mind. He begged to be permitted to accompany Jesus wherever He went; but Jesus told him rather to go home to his friends, and to tell them what great things God had done for him, and had shewn mercy unto him. The devils besought Jesus that they might enter a herd of swine which were feeding hard by; Jesus permitted them, and immediately the whole herd ran violently down a steep place into the sea. (If these swine belonged to Jews it was unlawful for them to keep them; and thus they were punished for covetousness and disobedience.) The Gadarenes, who dwelt on that coast, were so terrified at this miracle, that they besought Jesus to depart from them. They would have acted much more wisely, if, under a conviction of his great power, they had besought Him to extend to them his mercy, and to remain among them, and teach them what they must do to be saved.

At Capernaum, Christ and his disciples abode at the house of Matthew, who had been a *publican. While there, Jairus, the ruler of a *synagogue in that place, came and intreated Jesus to have compassion on his little daughter, who lay at the point of death. Jesus immediately accompanied Jairus. As they went, the crowd surrounded them; among the rest was a woman, who had been diseased with an issue of blood

twelve years, and could obtain no relief. Such was her faith in the power of Jesus, that she said, "If I may but touch the hem of his garment, I shall be made whole." She therefore came behind, and touched Him, and immediately she was completely cured. Jesus asked who touched Him? The disciples thought it was merely the crowd pressing upon Him; but He said that virtue had gone out for healing some one in particular. The poor woman then fell at his feet, and confessed the truth; and Jesus answered her,—“Daughter, go in peace; thy faith hath made thee whole.” Meanwhile, a message came to say, that the ruler’s daughter was dead. Nevertheless, Jesus proceeded to the house, saying, “Be not afraid, only believe. Weep not; she is not dead, but sleepeth.” All the people assembled laughed Him to scorn, as knowing that she was dead. But Jesus having put forth all except the three disciples, Peter, James, and John, and the father and mother of the damsel, took her by the hand, and said unto her, “Maid, arise!” and immediately she arose, and walked, to the astonishment and joy of her before afflicted parents.

Jesus was then followed by two blind men, who came to Him in the house, and entreated Him, saying,—“Thou Son of David, have mercy upon us.” Jesus asked them if they believed that He was able to restore their sight; and added, “According to your faith be it unto you:” and their eyes were opened. After this, a man dumb and possessed with a devil, was brought to Jesus. He expelled the evil spirit, and restored the man to speech and reason; but the Pharisees again wickedly charged Him with doing it in league with devils. Matt. viii. ix. xii. xiii. Mark ii. iii. iv. v. Luke viii. ix.

QUESTIONS.

- To what did the Pharisees ascribe Christ’s power over devils?
- What sign was given to them, that Jesus was the Christ?
- What miracle occurred as Christ and the disciples crossed the lake of Galilee?
- What happened when they reached the coast of the Gadarenes?
- What effect was produced on the Gadarenes by this miracle?
- For what purpose did Christ visit the house of Jairus?
- What took place as he went there?
- What miracle was wrought on two men who applied to Christ?
- What was the last miracle mentioned in this section?

VII. THE MINISTRY OF CHRIST CONTINUED.

About this time Jesus again visited Nazareth; but the people there were strongly prejudiced against Him on account

of the poverty of his circumstances, and the meanness of his origin; and, because of their unbelief, Jesus did not many mighty works among them. Passing then through the cities of Galilee, Jesus was moved with compassion for the people, who were in a state of spiritual ignorance and destitution, as sheep having no shepherd: and he sent forth the twelve *apostles by two and two, into every place which He was about to visit, to call the people to repentance, and to proclaim to them that the kingdom of heaven was at hand: they were also to perform miracles of healing, as Jesus himself did. The twelve soon returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the devils are subject to us in thy name." Jesus assured them, that farther triumphs awaited his Gospel; but told them to rejoice yet more in a personal interest in its blessings, for it would avail little to have done wonderful works in the name of Christ, and, after all, not to have received Him, and given themselves up to Him as their Saviour.

The fame of Jesus had now spread widely abroad, and had reached the ears of Herod, so that he was very desirous of seeing Christ. This was not merely curiosity to see a celebrated person, but arose partly from the apprehensions of a guilty conscience. Herod had long since put John the Baptist in prison for his faithful reproofs, on account of Herodias, (see p. 162), and he had lately been prevailed on by that wicked woman to put the prophet to death. At a great feast, the daughter of Herodias danced before Herod, and so delighted him, that he vowed to grant her any request she might make. At her mother's suggestion, she asked for the head of John the Baptist. Herod was averse to comply with this request; but having committed himself, he sent an executioner, and beheaded John in the prison. On hearing the fame of Jesus, Herod fancied that John was risen from the dead, and permitted to do these mighty works. Oh! what a tormentor is an accusing conscience!

Jesus and his disciples then crossed the sea or lake of Tiberias, and went to Bethsaida. The people went round the lake on foot, and so arrived at the same place; there Jesus preached to them, and healed the sick. As the evening drew on, the disciples proposed to send the people away to get themselves food; but Jesus said they need not depart, "give ye them to eat." The disciples said they had but a very small quantity of food—no more than five barley loaves and two small fishes—and the multitude was about five thousand men, beside women and children. Jesus commanded them

all to sit down on the grass in companies of fifty each ; and then, having blessed this food, He so multiplied it, that it afforded an abundant meal for this vast company, and twelve baskets full of fragments were gathered up.

This miracle convinced the people that Jesus was the expected Messiah ; and concluding, according to their vain expectations, that He was come to set up a worldly kingdom, they resolved to take Him by force and make Him a king ; but Jesus departed before they were aware ; and having sent the disciples across the lake, He returned to a mountain alone to pray. The wind was contrary, and the disciples were nearly exhausted with toiling and rowing, when, towards morning, they saw Jesus walking to them on the water. At first they were affrighted ; but Jesus said, " It is I ; be not afraid." Peter, somewhat rashly, asked leave to come to Jesus on the water ; but his faith and courage failed, and he began to sink. He cried to Jesus—" Lord, save, or I perish ;" and Jesus took him by the hand, and reproved his want of faith. They then both entered the ship, and immediately reached Gennesareth, where they landed. Jesus there healed many diseases, and then went on to Capernaum, where He was followed by many who had witnessed the miracle the day before. Jesus read their hearts, and knew that a worldly mercenary spirit induced them to follow Him. He discoursed to them concerning himself as the Bread of Life—of which both the manna in the wilderness and the bread of which they had lately partaken, were but *types or *emblems. As their views were wholly carnal, and the Redeemer's doctrine spiritual, they took offence at his statements, and went away. Jesus then asked the twelve, " Will ye also go away ?" Peter replied, in the name of all, " Lord, to whom shall we go ? thou hast the words of eternal life." Jesus then intimated, that though they all stood in so near and honourable a relation to Him, one of the twelve was a traitor,—alluding to Judas Iscariot, who afterwards betrayed Him. Jesus knew all hearts, and all circumstances that would take place ; but this by no means influenced a wicked man to commit wickedness. On the contrary, every such intimation was a warning to Judas to repent, and forsake a course that, if persisted in, would lead him to crimes far greater than he then contemplated. Matt. x.—xiv. Mark v. Luke ix. John vi.

QUESTIONS.

Why were the people of Nazareth prejudiced against Jesus ?

Why did Christ pity the inhabitants of Galilee ?

What did he do for their instruction?
 What surmises did Herod entertain of Christ?
 What was the end of John the Baptist?
 What miracle was wrought in Bethsaida?
 What effect had this miracle on the people?
 Whither did Jesus go that night?
 Under what circumstances did he meet the disciples again?
 What instructions did Christ give to the people who followed him
 on account of the miracle?
 Why did they take offence and leave him?
 Did the twelve also forsake him?
 What did Jesus intimate concerning Judas Iscariot?

VIII. THE MINISTRY OF CHRIST CONTINUED.

While Jesus was at Capernaum the *Scribes and *Pharisees from Jerusalem came to him, and upbraided him with not keeping the traditions of the elders. Jesus condemned these traditions, some as absurd and ridiculous, others as contradictory to the laws of God, and all of them as of human authority, and unconnected with moral purity. These remarks highly offended the Pharisees, and Jesus withdrew from them and retired to the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, which were inhabited by Gentiles. His fame soon spread; and among other applicants a poor woman came to seek relief for her daughter, who was grievously tormented with a devil. Jesus at first treated her with apparent neglect; she was not discouraged, but repeated her request. Jesus then said, "It is not fit to take the children's bread and cast it to dogs (in which light the Jews regarded all Gentiles). I am sent to the lost sheep of the house of the Israel." This was only designed to try her faith and humility. She was humbly willing to be reckoned mean and worthless as a dog, yet promptly added, "But even the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from the master's table." Then Jesus answered her, "O woman, great is thy faith; be it unto thee even as thou wilt; and her daughter was made whole from that very hour."

Jesus then returned by the coasts of Decapolis, and there healed one that was deaf and had an impediment in his speech. In this case Jesus took the patient aside and put his fingers into his ears, and spat and touched his ears, and looking up to heaven, sighed and said, "*Ephphatha*—that is—*be opened*." Many other afflicted persons, hearing of the fame of Jesus, came to Him for relief, and He healed them all.

A great multitude again remained about Jesus, listening to his discourses and observing his miracles; after three days

their provisions were exhausted, and Jesus again multiplied a very small provision to supply their wants. Seven loaves and a few small fishes sufficed for four thousand men, besides women and children, and seven baskets full of fragments were gathered up.

Jesus then crossed the lake and landed at Dalmanutha, or Magdala. There the captious *Pharisees again desired a sign from heaven; but he gave them no sign but that of the prophet Jonah as a *type of his own resurrection. Again he crossed the lake, and by the way warned his disciples against the leaven, or doctrine and spirit, of the *Pharisees and *Sadducees; but they mistook Him to allude to their having forgotten to take with them sufficient bread. At Bethsaida Jesus cured a blind man gradually: He first spat on his eyes and asked him if he saw any thing? the man then saw indistinctly—he saw men as trees walking. Jesus again touched his eyes, and he saw every thing clearly.

They went then to the coasts of Cesarea Philippi, and there Jesus asked the disciples whom men took Him to be. They said, some thought Elias (Elijah), and others Jeremiah, or some other of the prophets. Then Jesus asked what they, the disciples, thought of Him. Peter replied, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Jesus approved this noble confession, and declared that it was by the teaching of God that Peter was enabled to discern the great and glorious truth of his divinity; and that upon this rock He would build his church, and the gates (or councils) of hell should never prevail against it. Jesus then spoke of the power conferred on his inspired apostles, as giving them the keys of the church; from which we learn that what the apostles were *inspired to preach and write, is to be binding on the faith and obedience of the church in all ages of time. Perhaps the disciples might imagine that the worldly pomp they expected was now about to be revealed; but Jesus checked such an idea by immediately predicting his own sufferings, death, and resurrection. Peter shrunk from the prospect of his Master's sufferings, and said, "Be this far from thee, Lord; this shall not be unto thee;" but Jesus rebuked him, and said, "Get thee behind me, Satan. Thou art an offence to me. Thou savourest not the things of God, but those of men." Matt. xv. xvi. Mark vii. viii. Luke ix.

QUESTIONS.

On what account did the Pharisees upbraid Christ?
Why did Christ reject the traditions of the elders?

Who applied to Christ when he came to the coasts of Tyre and Sidon?

Why did Jesus delay to answer her request?

How did Jesus treat her at last?

What happened on the coasts of Decapolis?

What particulars attended the second miracle of multiplying food?

What did Christ mean when he cautioned the disciples against the leaven of the *Pharisees and Sadducees?

What particulars attended the cure of the blind man at Bethsaida?

What confession did Peter make at Cesarea Philippi?

What was meant by giving the keys of the church?

What did Jesus at this time foretell?

IX. THE TRANSFIGURATION.—CHRIST'S MINISTRY CONTINUED.

About a week after Christ had so particularly foretold his sufferings, He took Peter, James and John, and went up to Mount Tabor, where He was *transfigured before them. His countenance shone, and his raiment became white and glittering. There appeared also Moses and Elijah in glory, talking with Jesus of his sufferings and death, which were to take place at Jerusalem. At first the disciples were overpowered with slumber; but when they awoke and beheld his glory, they proposed to build three tabernacles for Jesus, Moses, and Elijah, to abide there. While they yet spoke, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice from the cloud said, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear ye Him." The disciples were sore afraid, and fell to the ground. When they arose the vision was withdrawn, and Jesus alone remained with them in his usual appearance. He charged the disciples to tell no man what they had seen until that He should be risen from the dead. This prediction they seem never to have understood until its accomplishment had taken place. Then they remembered with delight the words that Jesus had spoken to them.

When they descended from Mount Tabor they found a crowd gathered round the other disciples. A father had brought his afflicted son, and in the absence of their Master, the disciples, who had sometimes been permitted to work miracles, attempted, but in vain, to afford relief. On seeing Jesus, the father of the child came kneeling to him, and saying, "Lord have mercy on my son, my only child, a lunatic, deaf and dumb, sore vexed with a devil. This came on him from his infancy, and oft it hath cast him into the

fire and into the water to destroy him; but if thou canst do anything, have compassion on us, and help us." Jesus said, "If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth;" and the father of the child cried out and said, with tears, "Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief!" Jesus then charged the foul spirit to come out of him, and to enter him no more; and the spirit cried and rent him sore and came out of him, and he was as one dead, so that many thought he was dead; but Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up, and he arose.

At Capernaum the collectors of *tribute for the support of the sanctuary (Exod. xxx. 13) applied for the payment of that tax. Jesus might justly have claimed exemption; but He would not in anything give unnecessary offence, or appear to slight the observances enjoined upon the people. He therefore directed Peter to go to the sea and cast an hook, and in the mouth of the fish he should first catch he would find a piece of money, sufficient to pay the tribute for both.

The disciples of Jesus were often found disputing which should be chief among them. This was quite inconsistent with the instructions and example of their Master. It shews the mistakes and imperfections to which even good men are liable. Jesus reprov'd them by setting in the midst of them a little child, and telling them that he was the greatest who was most like a little child in meekness and humility. He also inculcated on them the duty of forgiveness by the parable of the servant to whom his lord had forgiven a great deal, but who fiercely exacted from a fellow-servant a trifle that was due to him. As the lord, on hearing of it, was wroth with the unmerciful servant, and cast him into prison till he should pay his own debt, "so," said our Lord, "will my heavenly Father do unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses."

About this time our Lord called to him seventy other disciples besides the twelve, and sent them out to preach the Gospel, and announce his approach.

The feast of *tabernacles was at hand. The brethren or relations of Jesus wished him to go up with them to the feast; but he remained behind, and afterwards went up privately. On the last and principal day of the feast, Jesus stood and proclaimed himself as the Water of life, free to every thirsty sinner. When He was seen teaching in the temple, different opinions were expressed concerning Him. At length the Pharisees sent men to take Him and bring Him to them; but those who were sent returned, saying,

"Never man spake like this man!" The Pharisees were enraged at the impression produced by the ministry of Jesus, and called the people accursed who believed on Him. Nicodemus (the ruler who formerly came to Jesus by night) said, "Doth our law condemn a man before it heareth him?" For this he was himself reviled as a Galilean.

The next morning Jesus came early into the temple. The *Scribes and *Pharisees, in hopes to entrap Christ into giving an opinion contrary to the law of Moses, brought a woman taken in adultery, and asked what punishment should be inflicted on her. Moses commanded that such should be stoned. Then, said Jesus, "Let him that is without sin among you cast the first stone." Their own consciences accused them of many sins as heinous as that of which the woman had been guilty, and they went out silently one by one. When Jesus was left alone with the woman, He said to her "Go, and sin no more."

Jesus afterwards spoke of himself as the Light of the world, and He who alone could bestow spiritual liberty. But the proud Jews, who always boasted themselves in their outward privileges, said they were Abraham's descendants, and were never in bondage. Jesus told them that if they had been the children of Abraham in his faith, as well as by natural descent, they would, like him, have believed and rejoiced in the salvation of the Gospel. The Jews were so enraged at what Jesus said, especially his asserting his existence before that of Abraham, that they tried to stone Him; but He passed away, and so escaped from them.

When the seventy disciples returned and related their success, Jesus rejoiced and said, "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight." The proud Pharisees, and Scribes, and priests, were wise and prudent in their own eyes, and they rejected the Gospel, while many who were humble and simple, like babes, were enabled to receive and enjoy it. This affords great encouragement to the poor and unlearned. They may be made wise unto salvation, if God himself becomes their teacher, and He has promised that He will give his Holy Spirit to those who ask Him.

One of the *scribes, or *lawyers, came to Jesus, tempting Him, and asking what he should do to inherit eternal life. Jesus told him of the law,—Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and thou shalt love thy neighbour

as thyself. If we read this law with humble and enlightened minds, it will at once convince us that we are sinners, and cannot be saved by the law, but must seek salvation in another way; and since God has appointed and revealed that way, it would lead us to Christ for salvation. But the lawyer had not read with such a spirit, and wishing to justify himself, and conceal from himself and others his own failures, he affected not to know whom he was to consider as his neighbour. Jesus then delivered the parable of the good Samaritan, which is intended to teach us to regard every man as our neighbour who comes within the reach of any good office we can render him.

Jesus then went to the house of a family at Bethany, who were honoured with his peculiar friendship—Martha, Mary, and their brother Lazarus. There they made a supper for Jesus and those who were with Him. Mary sat at Jesus' feet to listen to his instructive discourse; but Martha was too much cumbered in preparing the feast. She came in and said to Jesus, "Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her, therefore, that she come and help me." But Jesus reproved the worldly mindedness of Martha, and commended the piety of Mary, saying, "Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things, but one thing is needful, and Mary hath chosen that part which shall not be taken away from her."—True religion, the care of our immortal souls, is that one thing which no worldly interests can excuse our neglecting, or make up for the neglect. Matt. xvii. xviii. Mark ix. Luke ix. 2. John vii. viii.

QUESTIONS.

- What took place on Mount Tabor a week afterwards?
- Who appeared with Christ when he was transfigured?
- Did the disciples understand Christ's predictions?
- What miracle did Christ work on coming down from the mount?
- What was the tribute demanded of Christ at Capernaum?
- What miracle did he work in order to pay it?
- What were the disciples apt to dispute about?
- How did Christ reprove them?
- What disciples did Jesus send forth besides the twelve, and what were they to do?
- What did Christ proclaim on the great day of the feast of tabernacles?
- What answer did the officers bring to the Pharisees who sent them to take Jesus?
- What did Nicodemus say on that occasion?
- What sentence did Christ pronounce on the woman whom the Scribes and Pharisees brought to Him in the temple?

What question did the people propose to Jesus?

What was His Father's will?

What was the nature of the good Samaritan's intended to teach?

What lesson did Christ teach in Bethany?

What was the Father's will?

What was Christ's better offering?

X. THE MINISTRY OF CHRIST CONTINUED.

ABOUT THIS TIME the disciples of Jesus begged Him to teach them to pray, as John also had taught his disciples. He gave them this most comprehensive model, commonly called the Lord's prayer, and encouraged them to pray with confidence, importunity, and faith, by assuring them, that as earthly parents though sinful are ready to give good things to their children, how much more willing is our Heavenly Father to give us His Holy Spirit and every needful blessing to those who ask Him. Thus our Lord further illustrated by several parables: the man asking bread of his friend: the unjust judge and the importunate widow: and especially the humble publican, who smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner: and who was accepted and justified, rather than the proud, self-righteous Pharisee.

As Jesus thus taught the people, one of the company desired Him to settle a dispute about worldly property. Jesus refused to interfere in such a case, and warned them against covetousness and worldly mindedness, by the parable of a rich man, whose whole heart was in his gains, and who talked of enjoying them for years to come, when the same night his soul was required of him. Jesus also cautioned his disciples against over-anxiety, by assuring them of the constant care of Providence over them; He also exhorted them to be watchful and faithful; giving them the parable of servants to whom *talents had been entrusted by their lord, and who, on his return, were reckoned with and rewarded according to their fidelity and diligence, or to their sloth and unfaithfulness.

There were some present who mentioned the death of several persons by the falling of a tower in Siloam, and of others who were slain by Herod. Those who related these things seem to have imagined that the sufferers must have been sinners above other men, and that these were judgments of God against them; but Jesus assured his hearers, that except they repented, they would all likewise perish. He then gave the parable of the fruitless fig-tree, which was sentenced to be cut down, but spared at the pleading of the

vine-dresser, and new means tried to make it fruitful. If these succeeded, well, but if not, even the vine-dresser consented to its destruction. This parable applied both to the Jewish nation and to sinners in general; for God is long-suffering, and Jesus pleads for transgressors, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance; but for those who abuse this goodness and continue hardened in sin, there remains no hope.

In one of the *synagogues of Galilee, Christ, on the sabbath-day, healed an infirm or crippled woman, who had been diseased eighteen years. The ruler of the synagogue was greatly offended at this; but Jesus observed, that as common humanity would justify a man in giving a domestic animal necessary food on the sabbath, so it warranted healing this afflicted sufferer.

Jesus then went on his way towards Jerusalem, to keep the feast of the *dedication; as He went He taught the people in parables, comparing the small beginnings of his kingdom, and its rapid and effectual progress, to the growth of a grain of mustard seed; and to the effect of a little leaven on a large quantity of meal.

At Jerusalem, Jesus cured a man who had been blind from his birth; He anointed his eyes with clay, and commanded him to go and wash in the pool of Siloam. He did so, and returned seeing. The Jewish *council questioned the man concerning his previous blindness and the means of his cure, and when they could not gainsay the miracle, tried to persuade him that Jesus nevertheless was a sinner. For the plainness and firmness with which the man answered him, they put him out of the *synagogue; but they could not hinder either the poor man, or others who witnessed the miracle, from believing in Jesus as the Son of God.

In the porch of the temple, Jesus discoursed to the people, and compared himself to a Door, or Way of access to God; also as the good Shepherd, who loved the sheep, and gave his life for their ransom. In this discourse, He strongly asserted his own divinity and equality with God the Father, which so enraged the Jews, that they tried to stone Him; but He withdrew secretly, and went to Bethabara, beyond Jordan.● As He went, some asked Him a curious rather than a profitable question,—whether there were many or few that should be saved? Jesus gave them no direct answer, but bade them strive earnestly for their own salvation. Some of the Pharisees told Jesus that Herod sought to kill Him; but Jesus feared not to encounter danger while working the

work of Him that sent Him; besides, He knew that He should not perish out of Jerusalem. This led Him to bewail the obstinacy and blindness of the Jews, who, by their rejection of Him, were hastening on the destruction of their city and nation. He said, "O! Jerusalem, Jerusalem, that killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee: how often would I have gathered thy children together as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not."

Dining at the house of one of the Pharisees on the sabbath-day, Jesus taught his disciples to be humble, not anxious for distinction and applause; and to be charitable, doing good to those from whom they could expect no return. At this time, He cured a man of the dropsy, and shewed that it is lawful to do good on the sabbath-day. He also delivered the parable of the Great Supper, which the first invited guests neglected, and were afterwards justly excluded, while the poor and wretched were invited and welcomed to the feast. This signified the rejection of the Gospel by the Jews, and the calling of the Gentiles. As great multitudes followed Christ, and professed to be his disciples, He cautioned them against the love of the world, and told them that, unless they could forsake all for Him, they could not be his disciples. Many *publicans and sinners came to Christ to hear his doctrine, and were kindly received. This offended the proud *Scribes and *Pharisees, and they reproached Jesus, saying, "This man receiveth sinners and eateth with them." Jesus defended himself by saying, that great joy was occasioned in heaven by the repentance and conversion of sinners, and therefore they ought not to be rejected on earth. He also spoke three parables to the same effect—that of a shepherd rejoicing on finding one lost sheep; that of a woman on finding one lost piece of silver; and that of the ruined prodigal who, on his penitent return, was joyfully welcomed by his forgiving father.

About this time, Jesus spoke the parable of the unjust steward, to shew the wisdom of faithfully improving all that is intrusted to us, with a view to the account hereafter to be given. Another parable is that of the rich man, who lived in luxury and ungodliness, and at death went to a place of torment; and of Lazarus, the beggar, who led a life of poverty and misery, but at death went to heaven. The rich man in *hell* desired some relief, which could not be afforded him, *and then begged* that Lazarus might be sent to warn his

brethren on earth ; but the answer was, that if they would not believe and obey the Scriptures, "neither would they be persuaded though one went to them from the dead."

The Pharisees, about this time, questioned Christ respecting marriage and divorce, hoping to ensnare Him to say something contrary to the law of Moses ; but in all things He answered them wisely and well. There were also brought to Him little children, that He should put his hands on them, and pray. The disciples rebuked those who brought them, thinking that the application would be troublesome to their Lord. But Jesus graciously received the little children, and rebuked those who would have hindered them. He took the children in his arms, laid his hands on them, and blessed them, and said, "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven." This is great encouragement for children now to seek his blessing ; though Jesus is in heaven, He will not despise or reject them. He loves those that love Him, and those that seek Him early shall find Him. Luke xi.—xviii.

QUESTIONS.

- What request did the disciples make to Jesus ?
- What prayer did He then teach them ?
- What encouragement did He give them to pray ?
- What dispute was Jesus requested to settle ?
- Did He interfere with it ?
- What parable did Jesus deliver on the occasion ?
- What further instructions did he give the disciples ?
- By what parable did he recommend watchfulness and fidelity ?
- How did Jesus improve particular calamities ?
- What was taught by the parable of the barren fig-tree ?
- What cure did Jesus work in the synagogue at Galilee on the sabbath-day ?
- What cure did he work at Jerusalem at the feast of *dedication ?
- What did he say that so greatly enraged the Jews ?
- In what language did Jesus bewail the impenitence of Jerusalem ?
- What miracle was wrought in the house of the *Pharisee, where Jesus dined on the sabbath-day ?
- What parable was delivered there ?
- What did Christ say about receiving *publicans and *sinners ?
- What three parables relate to this subject ?
- What does the parable of the unjust steward teach ?
- What does the parable of Lazarus and the rich man teach ?
- How did Jesus receive the little children that were brought to him ?

XI. THE MINISTRY OF CHRIST CONTINUED.

While in his retreat at Bethabara, and on his journey towards Jerusalem, Christ continued to give his disciples

many excellent instructions,—to avoid giving offence, to be always ready to forgive, and to be humble under a constant sense of unworthiness and unprofitableness. Having to pass through Samaria, He sent some of the disciples to make preparations for his arrival at a village of Samaria. But the Samaritans refused to receive Him. The disciples, James and John, were indignant at this treatment of their Master, and desired permission to call down fire from heaven to consume the inhospitable people, as Elijah had formerly done (see 2 Kings i.) But Jesus rebuked them, saying, "Ye know not what spirit ye are of. The Son of Man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them."

On several occasions, persons professedly desiring to follow Christ, who were actuated only by worldly motives; to convince them how greatly they were mistaken, in expecting to make a gain of following Him, Jesus told them, "Foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has not where to lay his head."

As they proceeded, ten lepers met Jesus, and standing afar off, besought Him to have mercy on them. Jesus told them to go and shew themselves to the priests: and as they went, they were all cleansed; but one only turned back, and with a loud voice gave glory to God, and he was a Samaritan. Jesus censured the ingratitude of the rest, and said to him, "Arise, go thy way, thy faith hath made thee whole."

In many of his discourses, Jesus spoke of the true nature of his kingdom, which both his disciples and the Jews in general greatly misunderstood. He told them it would not come with outward pomp and show, but was even then silently establishing itself among (or within) them. He also spoke of the destruction of Jerusalem, which would be as sudden and unexpected, though so expressly foretold, as the flood that came upon the earth in the days of Noah.

Among others who applied to Jesus for instruction, was a young ruler, who inquired what he must do to inherit eternal life. Jesus referred him to the law, *perfect* obedience to which would insure the blessing. The young man must have been sadly ignorant, both of the requirements of the law of God and of his own sinfulness and imperfection, for he said, "All these things have I kept from my youth up; what lack I yet?" Jesus then gave him another test:—"Go, sell all that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven, and come follow me. But he went his way very sorrowful, for he had great possessions;" and after all his professions, he loved earth better than

heaven. Jesus then warned his disciples of the danger of trusting to riches, and having the heart set upon them. He also spoke of the rich reward that awaited those who had forsaken all for Him; especially the twelve apostles, who, having followed Christ, should hereafter sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

The parable of the labourers in the vineyard, spoken about this time, represents that the Gentiles, though brought in at a later hour of the day, should, through the mercy of God, be admitted to equal privileges with the Jews.

At this time, Jesus received a message from Martha and Mary, at Bethany, to say, that his beloved friend, Lazarus, was sick. Jesus, however, forbore to go to them until Lazarus had been some days dead and buried, in order that the glory of God might be more strikingly displayed in the miracle he was about to work. As Jesus drew near to Bethany, Martha met Him and fell at his feet, saying, "Lord, if thou hadst been here my brother had not died." Jesus assured her that her brother should rise again. "Yes," she replied, "I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day." Jesus said, "I am the Resurrection and the Life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live." Martha declared her firm belief that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world. She then called her sister Mary, who addressed Jesus much in the same manner,—and the sisters wept, and many Jews who came to condole with them wept, and Jesus wept. They then all went together to the grave of Lazarus; and in the presence of many witnesses, Jesus, having addressed his heavenly Father in thanksgiving, called upon Lazarus, and restored him to life by a word. Many of the Jews were convinced by this miracle, and professed their belief that Jesus was the Christ; but others were only hardened in their malice, and went and told the chief priests. A council was then held, and Caiaphas, the high priest, advised that Jesus should be put to death. Caiaphas was a wicked man, and spoke in bitter enmity against Christ; but God caused him, unconsciously, to utter a true prophecy, that Jesus should die, not for that nation only, but for the sins of the whole world. An order was issued to take Jesus; but He withdrew to Ephraim, a city in the wilderness.

The feast of the *passover now drew near, at which time Jesus knew that He should suffer many things of the Jews, and be put to death. On the way thither, He told the disciples these things; but they could not understand or receive

his saying, but still expected that He would establish a royal kingdom. As a proof of this, Salome, the mother of James and John, came to Jesus, and besought that her sons might sit, the one on his right hand, and the other on his left, in his kingdom. Jesus replied, "Ye know not what ye ask." He told them that they should share his sufferings and enter into heavenly glory; but intimated, that all expectations of worldly grandeur were unfounded. The other disciples were indignant against James and John at this request; not that their views were more correct or rational, but that all were alike ambitious of worldly distinction. But Jesus reproved them all, and taught them by his example, that the truest greatness consisted in the deepest humility, and most willing service to others.

As they drew near to Jericho, two blind men cried to Jesus, "Thou Son of David, have mercy on us!" A multitude rebuked them, that they should hold their peace; but they cried the more earnestly, "Thou Son of David, have mercy on us! Lord, that our eyes may be opened." Their request was granted, and their sight restored.

As Jesus and his followers passed through Jericho, Zaccheus, the chief of the publicans, having heard of the faith of Jesus, had a great curiosity to see Him. Being a short man, he could not get a sight in the crowd: he therefore went before, and climbed up a sycamore tree. When Jesus approached, He called Zaccheus by name, and bade him come down, for that He would pass the day at his house. Zaccheus hastened down, and received Him joyfully. He confessed his faith in Christ, and proved his sincerity by restitution to those whom he had injured, and by great liberality; and Jesus said, "This day is salvation come to this house." Wherever the grace of God brings salvation, it teaches to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in the world.

Quitting Jericho, and proceeding towards Jerusalem, Jesus spoke a parable very similar to one he had before spoken, but with some variations, of talents (or pounds) entrusted to servants, and rewards bestowed according to their diligence and fidelity: also the vengeance taken by the returning Lord on his rebellious subjects.

At Bethany, Jesus was entertained in the house of Simon the leper. Lazarus was one of the guests. Martha assisted in serving, and Mary again sat at the feet of Christ. Having by her an alabaster-box, of very precious ointment of spikenard, she poured it upon his head and feet. There arose

murmuring among the disciples, originating with Judas the traitor, against this alleged waste of the ointment, which (said Judas) might have been sold for much, and given to the poor. But Jesus, who reads the hearts of all, saw through the hypocrisy of Judas, and commended the believing liberality of Mary. It was usual among the Jews to *anoint the bodies of their friends before they were buried; and it appears that Mary was the first who discovered and believed the truth that Jesus would die, in order to his future exaltation. His death was now very near at hand; and He declared that Mary had anointed his body to the burial, and that this pious act of hers should be honourably mentioned wherever his Gospel should be preached.

Many were present at this feast, chiefly from a curiosity to see Lazarus, who had been raised from the dead. To prevent the fame of Jesus from spreading, the Jewish rulers conspired to kill Lazarus, but their designs were frustrated. Matt. xix. xx. Mark x. Luke xviii. xix. John xi. xii.

QUESTIONS.

What instructions did Jesus give to the disciples while in the retreat at Bethabara?

What insult did the Samaritans offer to Jesus?

How did the disciples propose to punish them?

Were they permitted to do so?

What did Christ tell those who would have followed him with the hope of gain?

What particulars attended the cure of ten lepers?

What question did the young ruler propose to Christ?

When Christ told him to keep the law perfectly, what answer did he make?

What did this answer shew?

When Christ told him to sell his possessions and give to the poor, how did he act?

What message did Jesus receive from Bethany?

Did he go there immediately?

What did he do when he arrived at Bethany?

What effect had this miracle on the Jews?

What ambitious request was made by Salome on behalf of her sons?

What miracle was wrought at or near Jericho?

What particulars attended the conversion of Zaccheus?

What evidence did he give of his sincerity?

What parable did Christ speak as he went up to Jerusalem?

What happened at the feast at Bethany?

What remark did the disciples (especially Judas) make about the ointment?

Did Jesus reprove or commend Mary?

How did this act shew her faith?

Why did the Jews try to kill Lazarus?

XII. CHRIST'S ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM, AND DISCOURSES THERE.

The next day Jesus went on towards Jerusalem. When they reached the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two of his disciples to the village of Bethphage, telling them that they should find a she-ass tied up with a colt, which they were to bring to Him; and that if the owner questioned them, they should say, "The Lord hath need of them," and he would willingly permit them to come. They did accordingly; and having brought the animals, the disciples cast their garments on them, and Jesus mounted one of them, and rode towards Jerusalem, the multitude cutting branches from the trees, which they strewed in the way, or carried in their hands, with expressions of joy and triumph. Many in the city, hearing of Christ's approach, came out to meet Him, and both companies joined in singing "Hosanna, blessed is the King that cometh in the name of the Lord!" Thus was fulfilled the prophecy of Zechariah, chap. ix. 9.

The descent of the Mount of Olives commanded a full view of the city; and as Jesus beheld it, He wept over its impenitence and approaching ruin, saying, "If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things that belong to thy peace, but now they are hid from thine eyes, because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation. For the days shall come upon thee that thine enemies shall compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, and shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee." (This prophecy was literally fulfilled about forty years afterwards.)

On entering Jerusalem, Jesus went to the temple; and finding it (as before, John ii. 13—17) thronged with buyers and sellers, He again thrust them out. Many of the blind and the lame came to Jesus in the temple, and were healed in the presence of the chief priests and *scribes. On witnessing these miracles, the children in the temple cried, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" This exceedingly enraged the priests, who endeavoured to silence them; but Jesus said, "Have ye never read, Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?" Thus ancient prophecy received its fulfilment; and (as on many occasions) they were referred to what was written in the Psalms concerning Christ. (Ps. viii. 2.)

At this time there were many strangers come to Jerusalem to keep the feast. Among the rest, some Greek *proselytes,

hearing of the fame of Jesus, desired to see Him, and begged Philip to introduce them. Jesus regarded this as an earnest of the success of his Gospel, in drawing together men of all nations. He besought his heavenly Father, to glorify his name ; and a voice from heaven proclaimed, " I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again."

That evening, Christ retired to lodge at Bethany ; and returning early the next morning, He was hungry. Seeing a fig-tree full of leaves, He went to it to seek fruit ; and finding none, though it was the time of year when figs might be expected, he sentenced it to perpetual barrenness,—a lively emblem of the Jewish church and nation, which, having a profession of godliness, but bearing no good fruit, became accursed. Jesus again taught in the temple, addressing himself chiefly to the common people, which greatly provoked the priests. He again purified the temple, and in the evening quitted the city : and the following morning, the disciples observed with astonishment, that the fig-tree had already withered away.

In the temple the Jewish rulers challenged Jesus by what authority He did and taught thus. Instead of directly answering them, Jesus asked them what they thought of the authority of John the Baptist? This perplexed them, for the people thought so highly of John, that the rulers feared a tumult if they should speak meanly of him. If, on the other hand, they should confess that John was sent from God, the reply would be, Then why did you not obey him? They therefore said they could not tell. "Then," said Jesus, "neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things." Jesus then spoke the parable of the two sons ; one, who said he would obey his father's commands, and did not ; the other, who at first refused, but afterwards obeyed. This represented the conduct of the Jews, who professed much, but were disobedient ; and the Gentiles, who, having been disobedient, were brought to repentance and obedience. Another parable spoken at this time was that of a vineyard let out to unfaithful husbandmen, who, instead of bringing their lord the fruits, beat and slew the servants whom he sent to demand them, and at last slew his only son. This represented the conduct of the Jews towards the prophets whom God had sent among them, and their rejection of Jesus Christ, his Son. The Jews could not help seeing the application of these parables, and were so enraged that they would have seized Jesus, only they feared the people.

By another parable Jesus shewed the danger of rejecting

the Gospel, as many who were invited refused to attend the marriage feast, and were afterwards excluded; and the danger of professing religion without devotedness of heart and consistency of life, by the man who attended the feast without a *wedding-garment, and was thrust out and awfully punished.

The *Pharisees and *Herodians then tried to ensnare Jesus into saying something that they might represent as treasonable. They asked Him if it was lawful to pay tribute to Cæsar? that is, if it was consistent with the law of God to acknowledge the authority of the Roman government? Jesus asked them whose image was on the coin? and said, "Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's;" that is, obedience to the state as good subjects, and the obedience of religion to God.

The *Sadducees then asked him an artful question about the resurrection; and the *Pharisees, as to which was the greatest commandment. Jesus gave them two, which comprehend the whole law, namely, that we should love God with all our hearts, and love our neighbour as ourselves. One of the *scribes admired the wisdom of this answer, and admitted that love to God and love to man were of far greater importance than mere outward ceremonies. Jesus said to this man, "Thou art not far from the kingdom of God." From this time they durst not ask Jesus any more questions; but He asked them how it was that David, in prophesying of the Messiah, who by descent was his son, spoke of Him as being his Lord? (Ps. cx. 1.) This they could not answer, for they did not see that the Messiah was both God and man.

After this Jesus sharply rebuked the *Scribes and *Pharisees for their pride, hypocrisy, and uncharitableness; and for their vain scrupulousness about every trifling thing, while they neglected the great duties of religion and morality; and He threatened them with speedy destruction.

These things were spoken in sight of the treasury, where people brought their offerings for the support of the temple. Jesus saw many rich men cast in great gifts in a spirit of ostentation. One poor widow also came, and with a humble and sincere heart cast in two mites, which make a farthing. It was all she had, and Jesus said it was more than all the rich gifts of the proud. This should encourage us to do what we can, assured that God accepts, not according to the largeness of the offering, but according to the willingness of the giver.

Jesus then left the temple, and entered it no more. The

prophet foretold that the glory of this latter house should be greater than the former. Hag. ii. 7—9. This glory consisted in the Messiah visiting and teaching there; but when the Jews rejected the Messiah, the glory of the Lord departed, and then their house was left unto them desolate.

On Mount Olivet the disciples pointed to the temple, and admired its goodly buildings; but Jesus told them there was not one stone upon another that should not shortly be demolished. He also foretold many dreadful calamities which would befall the Jewish nation, and issue in its desolation. He urged upon them the duty of watchfulness and preparation for these events, and especially for the second coming of the Son of Man to judgment, when all the world would be assembled before Him, and divided and dealt with according to their several characters. In this discourse Jesus spoke the parable of the ten virgins, which is intended to shew that a mere profession of religion is unavailing without real grace in the heart; also that of the talents, with the reward of faithful improvement, and the punishment of unfaithfulness and sloth. He then plainly described the solemnities of the judgment-day.

The next day the chief priests took council together to kill Jesus, and Jesus most plainly told his disciples of his approaching sufferings and death. The day after, Judas went to the chief priests, and offered to betray his Master to them for thirty pieces of silver. This was according to ancient prophecy. Zech. xi. 12, 13.

On the same day Jesus sent forward two of his disciples to prepare for their eating the *passover in Jerusalem. He told them of a certain house where they should see a man carrying a pitcher of water. They were to follow him, and make ready for the feast in his house. This was a miracle, for if Jesus had not been divine, He would not have known exactly how a certain person should be employed in such a minute particular, at a precise moment of time. The disciples did as they were commanded, and found it as Jesus had said, and at the appointed time Jesus and the rest of the disciples came to the place, and sat down to keep the feast.

As they sat at table, the disciples fell into a vain dispute about superiority, which Jesus reproved, telling them it was utterly inconsistent with his doctrines and example. Still farther to enforce on them humility and brotherly love, Jesus took water and a towel, and stooped to wash the feet of the disciples. Peter at first refused to suffer his Lord thus to degrade himself; but He said, "What I do thou knowest not

now, but thou shalt know hereafter. If I wash thee not thou hast no part in me." Peter then said, "Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head." If we desire to be saved by Christ, we must be willing to be purified by Him; and must submit to many dispensations in his providence, which we do not at the time understand, but which, though they may be very painful, are designed to work about our real good.

Having pressed on the disciples brotherly love, which He called his new commandment, Jesus promised great rewards and honours to his faithful servants; but intimated that one then present would shortly afterwards betray Him. The disciples were greatly distressed at this intimation, and each anxiously asked, "Lord, is it I?"

The apostle John was particularly distinguished as the disciple whom Jesus loved; on that occasion he sat next his Lord, and, according to the reclining posture of the Jews at table, leaned on his bosom. They beckoned to him to press Jesus plainly to tell them who it was that should betray Him. Jesus then marked out Judas, by giving a piece of bread sopped in the sauce of bitter herbs eaten with the *passover supper. Judas then went out to pursue his wicked purpose. After he was gone, Jesus told the rest that He was about to depart from them, and that they could not go with Him then, but should follow Him afterwards. Peter, who always discovered a warm and ardent spirit, said, "Why cannot I follow thee now? I will follow thee to prison and to death. I will lay down my life for thy sake." But Jesus assured Peter that so far from remaining steadfast to these resolutions when the trial came, he would desert and deny his Lord.

At the close of the *passover supper, Jesus took bread and blessed it, and brake and gave it to his disciples, bidding them eat it, as a memorial or representation of his body, which was about to be broken for sin. In like manner He took the cup of wine, giving thanks, and bidding them drink it, as an emblem of his blood, which was to be shed for the remission of sins. Thus He instituted the ordinance of the Lord's Supper, and commanded his followers to observe it to the end of time, in remembrance of his sufferings and death, and in token of their partaking, by a lively faith, of the benefits procured thereby; as well as a means of confirming them in faith, love, and holiness. After singing a hymn together, they prepared to go to the Mount of Olives.

Meanwhile, Jesus addressed to his disciples a most affec-

tionate and consolatory discourse, forewarning them of approaching trials, but promising to send the Holy Spirit, to grant the apostles all needful assistance in their special work, and to remain with the church for ever, to enlighten, sanctify, and comfort all true believers. Jesus also declared, that the object of his going away, was to prepare mansions in heaven for all his faithful followers, and that He would come again and receive them to dwell with Him for ever. To shew how close was the union subsisting between Him and them, He compared himself to the vine, and his disciples to the branches, and exhorted them to bear much fruit to the glory of God. After this, Jesus prayed to his heavenly Father, to receive Him to the glory which He had before the beginning of the world, and to bless and preserve His church on earth, in purity of doctrine, holiness of life, and unity of spirit, that so the world might be convinced that His religion was divine. He also interceded that all his followers might at last be admitted to share His glory.

Jesus and his disciples then went to the garden of Gethsemane, on the Mount of Olives, a spot to which He often retreated. By the way, He again warned Peter of his approaching fall, and declared that all the disciples would forsake Him. They all declared their purpose to abide by Him; but they promised in their own strength. Before they parted, Jesus told them that He should rise again from the dead, and commanded them to meet Him in Galilee. Matt. xxi.—xxvi. Mark xi.—xiv. Luke xix.—xxii. John xii.—xvii.

QUESTIONS.

- Where was Jesus going at this time?
- For what purpose did he send two of his disciples to Bethphage?
- In what manner did Jesus enter Jerusalem?
- What prophecy was thus fulfilled?
- What emotion did Jesus express as he descended the mount of Olives?
- Was our Lord's prediction of the destruction of Jerusalem fulfilled?
- When Christ healed the blind and the lame in the temple, what honour was paid him by the children?
- What did the priests say to this?
- What prophecy did this fulfil?
- What strangers were they who desired to see Jesus?
- What particular attestation was rendered to Christ in their presence?
- Where did Christ lodge that night?
- Why did he curse the fig-tree?
- Of what was this an emblem?
- How did Christ confound the rulers when they demanded his authority?

What parables did Jesus speak which exposed the Jewish rulers and greatly enraged them?

What parable represents the danger of rejecting the Gospel, and of professing it without real piety?

How did the *Pharisees and *Herodians try to entrap Jesus? and how did he answer them?

What question did the *Sadducees ask Him?

What remark did one of the Scribes make on our Lord's answer to the Pharisees?

When the enemies of Christ forbore to question Him, what question did He put to them?

What is related about the gifts to the treasury?

What did Christ foretell concerning the temple and city of Jerusalem?

What parables were spoken in this connexion?

What great event did Jesus plainly describe?

What was Judas's first act of treachery?

What prophecy was thus fulfilled?

Whither did Jesus send his disciples to prepare the Passover?

By what significant action did Jesus enforce on his disciples humility and brotherly love?

In what manner did Jesus intimate His knowledge of the treachery of Judas?

What professions did Peter make?

What ordinance did Jesus institute?

What was the great promise that Jesus made to his disciples when about to leave them?

How long was the Holy Spirit to remain in the church, and for what purpose?

What were the particular objects of Christ's intercessory prayer?

Whither did Jesus and his disciples go, when they left the house where they had kept the feast?

XIII. CHRIST'S SUFFERINGS AND DEATH.

On entering the garden, Jesus took with him only Peter, James, and John, and left the rest of the disciples at a little distance, enjoining on them all to watch and pray, lest they should enter into temptation. The mind of Jesus was now absorbed in the great work of human redemption, the dreadful price of which He was about to pay. Beginning to be amazed and overwhelmed in spirit, He withdrew alone to a secret spot, where He endured an awful agony, so that He sweat great drops of blood. This was according to the saying of the prophet Isaiah: "The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all. It pleased the Lord to bruise Him. He hath put Him to grief. He bare the sins of many." Isa. liii. Once and again, Jesus came to the three disciples, and found them sleeping, with sorrow. He said to them,— "What, could ye not watch with me one hour? Watch

and pray, that ye enter not into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." In His dreadful agony, Jesus prayed to his Father with strong crying and tears, saying, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done!"—so keenly did the blessed Redeemer feel his sufferings as a man, yet so willing was He to endure all that was necessary for the glory of God and for the salvation of sinners!—and there appeared an angel from heaven strengthening Him. As Jesus came the third time to his sleeping disciples, Judas entered the garden, with a band of men and officers, to seize Him; and, according to a signal previously agreed on, the detestable traitor pointed out his Master, by coming to Him with seeming affection, and kissing Him. As the men approached to seize Jesus, He said to them, "If ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, I am He:" and his majesty and glory so overwhelmed them, that immediately they went backward, and fell to the ground. When they recovered from their consternation, Jesus voluntarily gave himself up to them—only engaging that his disciples should be permitted to go their way. When the officers laid hold on Jesus, Peter drew his sword, and smote the high-priest's servant, named Malchus, and cut off his ear. Jesus instantly healed the man's ear, and commanded Peter to put up his sword; saying that He gave himself up, not from any want of power to resist, having legions of angels at command; but that He might fulfil what was foretold of Him in Scripture, and obey the will of his heavenly Father. Jesus also told those who came to take Him, that they needed not have come as against a thief, with swords and staves, since He had given them many opportunities of taking Him without tumult. Then all the disciples forsook Him and fled. Here again was a fulfilment of prophecy, for it is written concerning Him, (Zech. xiii. 7.) "Smite the Shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered."

Jesus was then conducted to the palace of Caiaphas, the high-priest. Peter followed Him there; but being charged by one and another with being one of Christ's followers, he so far forgot his boasted attachment, as to deny thrice, and that with oaths and curses, that he even knew Jesus. What a warning against self-dependence! Surely, it becomes us to say, "Lord, hold thou me up, and I shall be safe; and let not any iniquity have dominion over me." But, though Peter had thus gone astray like a lost sheep, he was not left to his guilty wanderings. No sooner had he uttered the third denial of his Master, than the cock crew a second time.

found any cause of death in Jesus. Yet, wishing to please the Jews, he offered to chastise Him and let Him go. But the Jews vehemently demanded that He should be condemned. It had always been the custom at that feast, for Pilate to release one Jewish prisoner. Hoping therefore to save Jesus without acquitting Him, though fully convinced of his innocence, Pilate offered to the choice of the Jews, the innocent Jesus, or a notorious robber, traitor, and murderer, named Barabbas. But the multitude, set on by the priests, exclaimed, "Not this man, but Barabbas;" and of Jesus, " *Crucify Him! crucify Him!" Thus were several Scriptures fulfilled—"He was despised and rejected of men:" "He was numbered with the transgressors:" "He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb," so he openeth not his mouth. See Isa. liii. Pilate then scourged Jesus, and led Him, clothed with purple and scarlet, and crowned with thorns, into the judgment-hall. There the soldiers mocked Him, and smote Him on the head. At this time, Pilate received a message from his wife, saying, "Have thou nothing to do with that just man, for I have suffered many things in a dream this day concerning Him." Pilate once more tried to save Him; but the Jews clamorously said, "If thou let this man go, thou art not Cæsar's friend." At length he yielded to their clamour, and gave up Jesus to be crucified: but washed his hands, saying, "I am innocent of his blood." The Jews said, "His blood be upon us and our children." This act of Pilate was mere superstition and hypocrisy, and could in no degree release him from the guilt of condemning one whom he knew to be innocent. But the curse which the Jews called down has ever since rested on them and their children, nor can it be removed, but by their relying on that blood which they so impiously shed.

Jesus was then led away to be *crucified, and at first compelled to bear the weight of his own cross; but afterwards was relieved by Simon, a Cyrenian, who passed that way. Several women, who had before ministered to Jesus of their substance, now followed Him to Mount Calvary, weeping; but Jesus said, "Weep not for me, but weep for yourselves and your children,"—alluding to the dreadful calamities that were coming upon the Jewish nation.

When they reached the place of execution, the soldiers offered Him to drink vinegar mingled with gall; thus fulfilling *Psa. lxxix. 21*: but when He tasted thereof He would not drink. The soldiers then stripped off his clothes, and

divided them by lot, (in fulfilment of *Psa. xxii. 18.*) and crucified Him between two thieves. *Isa. liii. 12.* Then said Jesus, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Thus, in the extremity of his agonies, so far from indulging a vindictive spirit, He even prayed for his cruel murderers; and this prayer was answered, when some of them were pricked to the heart, and sought salvation through his blood. *Acts ii.* In all this, He not only suffered for us, but left us an example, that we should follow His steps, who, when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not.

In the most cruel manner was this Holy Sufferer reviled and scoffed by those that passed by—by the chief priests and *rulers, the *scribes and *elders, and by one of the thieves who were crucified with Him. But the other malefactor, in his last moments, was touched with penitence and faith, and made a partaker of saving mercy. He rebuked his companion who reviled Christ, acknowledged the justice of his own condemnation, attested the innocence of Jesus, and prayed to Him as the Lord of all: "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom!" and Jesus said, "To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise." This singular instance of divine grace, extended at the latest period of life, stands as a blessed encouragement to the penitent, under any circumstances, not to despair; but it affords no just ground to any who defer repentance, to hope that they shall find pardon in a dying hour. Now is the accepted time!

Jesus looking down, beheld at the foot of the cross his mother, standing and weeping, and John, the beloved disciple, standing by her. Jesus affectionately commended her to his care, and from that hour he took her to his house, and was as a son to her.

It was now mid-day, and a miraculous darkness overspread the earth, which lasted three hours, and evidently intimated the sympathy of heaven with the transactions of earth. When the darkness had passed away, Jesus, who, though in dreadful agonies, still retained perfect consciousness, cried out, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" This is perhaps the most mysterious part of the whole scene. We can only account for it by the odiousness of sin in the sight of a Holy God, which caused Him to frown even upon his own Son, when he bore the sins of men. Jesus then said, "I thirst," and they gave Him vinegar to drink. Having received it, He said, "It is finished; Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit," and bowed his head, and expired. At the

same moment the *veil of the temple was rent from the top to the bottom, at the very time when the priests were assembled for the evening sacrifice; signifying, as the Apostle Paul tells us, that by the rending of the flesh of Jesus, a new and living way was opened into the holiest by his blood. Heb. x. 20. There was also a great earthquake, by which the rocks were rent; and the graves opened, and many dead saints returned to life. The Roman *centurion, on beholding all these things, exclaimed, "Certainly this was a righteous man! Truly this man was the Son of God!" And those that came together at that sight, smote their breasts and returned. But several women, some from Galilee and some from Jerusalem, remained to assist in the burial.

As the eve of the Sabbath drew on, the Jews were anxious to hasten the taking down of the bodies from the crosses, and brake the legs of the two thieves, to ascertain that they were dead; but, when they came to Jesus, He was already so evidently dead, that they brake not his legs. Thus was a *typical allusion fulfilled; in which it was enjoined that not a bone of the *Paschal lamb should be broken. Exod. xii. 46. But one of the soldiers pierced his side, and there came out blood and water; which at once proved the certainty of his death, and gave occasion to the literal fulfilment of prophecy: "They shall look on Him whom they pierced, and shall mourn." Zech. xii. 10. 1 John v. 6.

Joseph of Arimathea, a rich man, one of the Jewish council, who had not consented to their unjust deed in the condemnation of Jesus, but who, indeed, was a disciple of Jesus, though secretly,—now went to Pilate, and begged permission to bury the body. Having obtained leave, he took down the body of Jesus, and with the assistance of Nicodemus and the women, he placed it in his own new tomb, intending, when the Sabbath was over, to *embalm it after the manner of the Jews. The good offices of Joseph and of Nicodemus verified the prediction that his grave should be with the rich. Isa. liii. 9.

The sepulchre was hewn out of a solid rock, and a massy stone was placed at the entrance; but this was not security enough for the restless Jews, who remembered the predictions of Jesus, that He would rise again on the third day. They therefore went to Pilate, and begged that the stone might be sealed, and a guard of soldiers set to watch it till after that period, to prevent any attempt of the disciples to steal the body, and say that their Master was risen. But the very precautions they took, by preventing the possibility of any

deception, only served to confirm the truth of His subsequent resurrection. Matt. xxvi. xxvii. Mark xiv. xv. Luke xxii. xxiii. John xviii. xix.

QUESTIONS.

What took place in the garden of Gethsemane?

How can we account for the agony of soul endured by so righteous a person?

How did Jesus pray in his agony?

Was any succour afforded Him?

How were the disciples employed during their Lord's agony?

Who entered the garden while Jesus and his disciples were there?

In what manner did Judas point out to the soldiers which was Jesus?

Did they immediately seize Jesus?

How did Peter attempt to defend his Master?

Did Jesus allow the disciples to resist?

Could Jesus have resisted the force sent to take Him?

Why did He not?

What Scripture was fulfilled in the dispersion of the disciples?

Where was Jesus taken first?

What charge was brought against Him?

How did Peter act when addressed as a follower of Jesus?

Was Peter ever brought to repentance?

Where was Jesus taken next?

In what manner did the high-priest adjure Him?

How did Christ reply?

What advantage was taken of this?

How did Judas act, when he saw that Jesus was condemned?

When the Jewish council had condemned Christ, why did they not order him to be executed?

What new charge was brought against Jesus before Pilate?

What was Pilate's opinion of Jesus?

To whom did Pilate send Jesus?

What did Herod think of Jesus?

If both Herod and Pilate agreed that Jesus was innocent, why did they not release Him?

Whom did the Jews prefer before Jesus, and what was his character?

What particular insults were offered to Jesus?

What message did Pilate receive from his wife?

How did he affect to clear himself from shedding innocent blood?

What did the Jews say about it?

By what death did Jesus suffer?

Who assisted in bearing the cross for Him?

Who followed Jesus, and in what manner did he address them?

In what manner did Christ pray for his murderers?

What is remarkable concerning one of the thieves crucified with Jesus?

How did Jesus provide for his mother?

What miracles attended the death of Jesus?

What impression was produced on the mind of the Roman centurion?

By what circumstance was the death of Christ ascertained, and
 was a remarkable prophecy fulfilled?

Who attended to the burial of Jesus?

What was done to secure his tomb?

XIV. THE RESURRECTION AND ASCENSION OF CHRIST.

Very early in the morning on the first day of the week there was a great earthquake; an angel rolled away the stone from the door of the sepulchre; Jesus arose from the dead, and the guards fled in terror and dismay.

Not aware of this, the women came to the sepulchre at break of day, bringing spices with them for *embalming. As they went, they were concerned about getting the stone removed; (it appears that they were not aware of the guard being stationed there;) but when they reached the spot, they found the stone rolled away, and the body of Jesus missing. One of them, named Mary Magdalen, hastened to inform the disciples. During her absence, Mary (the wife of Cleophas) and Salome saw an angel, who told them that Jesus was risen, and bade them go and tell the disciples, especially Peter, that He would meet them in Galilee, according to his word. As these women went, Mary Magdalen returned, together with Peter and John, who went into the sepulchre, and saw the linen clothes in which the body had been wrapped, carefully laid aside. They saw not the angel, but retired from the *sepulchre, greatly wondering. Mary remained weeping at the tomb; and looking in, she saw two angels sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. They asked her whom she sought, and why she wept? She replied, "They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him." As she still wept, Jesus himself addressed her. She knew him not, but took him for the gardener, and said, "Sir, if thou have borne Him hence, tell me where thou hast laid Him, and I will fetch Him away." Jesus then said to her, "Mary!" She knew his voice, and said, "Rabboni, my Master!" Jesus then bade her go and tell the disciples that He should shortly ascend to his Father and their Father, his God and their God. As Mary Magdalen went, she met the other Mary and Salome, and as they talked together of what they had seen and heard, Jesus himself joined them, and conversed with them.

Meanwhile the other women from Galilee had come to assist in the embalming. They too found the stone rolled away and the body gone; as they were greatly perplexed;

two angels stood by them and told them, that their Lord was risen. They, too, hastened to the disciples and related what they had seen; but they regarded their words as idle tales.

When the report of the guards reached the chief priests, they gave large bribes to the soldiers to give out that the disciples had stolen their Master away; promising to secure them from the punishment for sleeping at their post. Some time that day Jesus appeared to Peter alone. In the evening of that day two of the disciples went to Emmaus, a village about seven miles from Jerusalem. As they went they conversed about their Master, and were sad. Jesus himself joined them, though they knew Him not. He entered into their feelings and circumstances, and explained to them that all these things had fallen out in exact fulfilment of ancient prophecy respecting the Messiah. When they reached Emmaus, the stranger offered to proceed alone, but they persuaded Him to remain with them. As they sat at meat together, He broke bread and blessed it. Then they knew that it was the Lord, and He vanished out of their sight.

The two disciples returned to Jerusalem the same hour of the night, to tell the other disciples what had occurred. They found them rejoicing in the same glorious fact. "The Lord is risen, indeed, and has appeared unto Simon!" While they were thus conversing, Jesus himself stood in the midst, and said, "Peace be unto you." He moreover ate with them, and reproved their unwillingness to believe what He had so often spoken. He commanded them to go forth and preach repentance and remission of sins in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. At this time Thomas was absent, and when informed of what had taken place, he refused to believe that Jesus was risen, and declared that he would never believe except he saw and touched Him.

A week after, Jesus again stood in the midst of the disciples, the doors being shut. Thomas was then among them, and Jesus invited him to observe and handle his wounds, and so convince himself that his Lord was indeed risen from the dead. He was then convinced, and exclaimed, "My Lord, and my God!"

Jesus next came to the disciples on the shore of the sea of Tiberias. Several of them were fishing; and having toiled in vain all night, in the morning Jesus spoke to them from the shore, and directed them to cast in their nets on the right side of the ship. They did so; and now they were not able to draw for the multitude of fishes. Then they

knew that it was the Lord. On coming to shore they found a fire and fish laid thereon, and bread. Jesus commanded them to prepare some of the fish they had just caught, and He himself blessed and distributed the meal. After this Jesus conversed with the disciples; questioned Peter as to whether he loved Him. Peter's love might well be doubted; but, with all his imperfections he was sincere at heart, and he appealed to Jesus, who could read his heart, "Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee." Jesus then repeatedly commanded him to feed his sheep and his lambs. He also foretold that in his old age he should be crucified for his sake. Peter inquired what was allotted for John. Our Lord reproved his vain curiosity, saying, "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou me." Hence a mistaken report went abroad that John was not to die.

After this Christ appeared to about five hundred brethren at once, on one of the mountains of Galilee. Then, and in other interviews, Jesus explained to his disciples the fulfilment of Scripture. He told them that all power was given to Him in heaven and in earth, and appointed them to go forth as his witnesses in the earth. They were, however, to remain in Jerusalem until they should receive the promised gift of the Holy Spirit, and then to go forth into all the world, preaching salvation through faith in his name, and baptizing into a profession of faith in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; Jesus promising to be with them, that is with his church, to the end of the world. To the first disciples he gave power to work miracles, in order to prove the truth of the Gospel.

After remaining on earth forty days, Jesus took his disciples to Mount Olivet, and there, as he blessed them, He parted from them and ascended to heaven in their sight, riding on a bright cloud. Two angels were sent to comfort them with the assurance that Jesus would come again in like manner. This refers to his second coming at the last day. They then worshipped their Lord, and returned to Jerusalem, there to wait the descent of the Holy Spirit.

Many particulars of the life of Christ are not recorded, because they would too much have enlarged the narrative, and many would have been unable to procure or to read it; but enough is recorded to convince us that Jesus was indeed the Christ, the Son of God, and to lead us to rely on Him for salvation, and yield obedience to all his commands. Matt. xxviii. Mark xvi. Luke xxiv. John xx. xxi. Acts i.

QUESTIONS.

- When did Jesus rise from the dead?
 What became of the guards who watched his tomb?
 Who first told the disciples that Jesus was risen from the dead?
 To whom did Jesus first appear after his rising from the dead?
 What did the chief priests do, when the soldiers told them that Jesus was risen?
 What took place as the two disciples walked to Emmaus?
 When they returned to Jerusalem, how did the disciples receive them?
 What happened while they were conversing together?
 Which of the disciples was absent at this interview?
 Did he believe the report of the other disciples?
 Was he ever convinced that Jesus had risen from the dead?
 In what manner did Jesus manifest himself to the disciples at the sea of Tiberias?
 What conversation took place with Peter at this interview?
 What mistake went abroad concerning John?
 To what promise did Jesus particularly allude?
 Where were they to remain till they had received it?
 What were they to do then?
 What ordinance did Jesus then institute?
 What promise did He leave with the church?
 What particular power was given to the apostles, and for what purpose?
 How long did Jesus remain on earth after his resurrection?
 In what manner did Jesus ascend to heaven?
 What were the disciples told by two angels?
 What did they do then?
 Are all the particulars of Christ's life fully recorded?
 What is the design of the record given in concerning Jesus?

XV. THE EARLY HISTORY OF THE CHURCH AT JERUSALEM.

The Acts of the Apostles may be regarded as a second part or continuation of the Gospel by St. Luke. It begins by relating more particularly the circumstances of our Lord's ascension from Mount Olivet, near Bethany; and the testimony of the angels to his future return. The apostles immediately returned to Jerusalem, and being assembled together with the rest of the disciples, to the number of about one hundred and twenty, they chose Matthias by prayer and by lot to be an apostle in the room of Judas, the traitor, in whose transgression and death were seen a remarkable fulfilment of prophecy. Ps. lxxix. 25; cix. 8.

Ten days after Christ's ascension was the Jewish feast of *Pentecost. At this time the disciples were assembled together; the Holy Ghost descended upon them with the sound of a rushing mighty wind, and the visible appearance of

loven tongues of fire, which sat upon each of them. Immediately they were enabled to speak in various languages which they had never learned, yet so as to be distinctly understood by men of different nations to whom the languages were familiar. This astonishing fact attracted great notice, and those who came together surmised various causes for what they beheld. But Peter stood forth, and assured them that this was no other than the fulfilment of ancient prophecy concerning the times of the Gospel dispensation. Joel ii. 28—32. He declared that Christ Jesus, whom the Jewish rulers had crucified, was, by the right hand of God, raised from the dead and exalted to glory, and had poured forth these miraculous gifts upon them. On hearing this, the multitude were pricked to the heart, and anxiously inquired what they must do. Peter exhorted them to repentance and faith in Christ for pardon and salvation, and to a profession thereof by being baptized in his name. So successful was this first proclamation of the Gospel, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, poured out by a risen Saviour, that three thousand persons were converted, baptized, and added to the church; and their signal piety, holiness, and mutual love, attracted many more to join them; and the Lord added to the church daily of such as should be saved.

According to the promise of their Lord, the apostles were endued with the power of working miracles. As Peter and John went into the temple, they saw a poor man begging, who had been lame from his birth. They said to him, in the hearing of many witnesses, Silver and gold have we none, but such as we have give we unto thee; in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk. And immediately he received strength, and rose up, leaping and walking, and praising God. As the people crowded round, greatly wondering, the apostles assured them that what they had done was not by any power or holiness of their own, but in the name and by the power of Jesus, who had been crucified and slain; but by the power of God raised and exalted according to ancient prophecy. They also called on them to repent and believe the Gospel, which to them, as the descendants of Abraham, was first published and offered. While they were thus speaking the priests and Sadducees came upon them, being grieved that they taught the people, and preached through Jesus the resurrection of the dead. They put the apostles (Peter and John) in prison; nevertheless, their word took effect, for five thousand persons were

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The Acts of the Apostles may be regarded as a part or continuation of the Gospel by St. Luke, by relating more particularly the circumstances of Christ's ascension from Mount Olivet, near Bethany, and his promise to the angels to his future return. He immediately returned to Jerusalem, and being gathered together with the rest of the disciples, to the number about one hundred and twenty, they chose Matthias by prayer and by lot to be an apostle in the room of the traitor, in whose transgression and death there was a remarkable fulfilment of prophecy. Ps. lxxix. 4.

Ten days after Christ's ascension was the Jewish Pentecost. At this time the disciples were assembled together; the Holy Ghost descended upon them with the sound of a rushing mighty wind, and the visible appearance

converted to the faith of Christ. Next day the apostles were brought out and publicly examined as to what they had done. They stedfastly maintained that the lame man was healed by the power of Jesus Christ, "who," said they, "is the stone that was set at nought by you builders, but is become the head-stone of the corner. (Ps. cxviii. 22.) Neither is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name given under heaven among men whereby we must be saved." The Jewish rulers, knowing that Peter and John were uneducated men, were astonished at the boldness with which they thus maintained their Master's cause; and being unable to deny a notable miracle, which was obvious to the eyes of all the people, they dismissed the apostles, strictly charging them to speak no more in that name; but they nobly replied that they must obey God rather than man. The apostles then returned to the rest of the disciples, and gave thanks to God, and prayed for the farther success of the Gospel; and as they prayed the whole assembly was filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake boldly the word of God.

Such was the spirit of opposition against Christianity, that in all probability many persons in embracing the Gospel relinquished their worldly all, and must have perished but for the liberality of their brethren. Those who had great possessions in Judea, if they firmly believed the word of the Lord Jesus about the destruction of that country, would be inclined literally to obey that command, "Sell that ye have, and give alms to the poor, and ye shall have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me." Accordingly we find that those who had lands and possessions sold them, and the whole was thrown into one common stock, which the apostles distributed to all the disciples, according to their need. Among these was Barnabas, or Joses, a Levite of the island of Cyprus. He afterwards became an eminent preacher and apostle, and was called *the son of consolation*.

But even in those earliest, purest days of Christianity, there were hypocrites in the church. This should teach us not to be disgusted at religion, or think there is no reality in it, because we may see or hear of some who hypocritically profess it now. At the same time it should make us anxiously concerned for our own sincerity, and lead us to adopt the psalmist's prayer, "Search me, O God, and know my heart. Try me, and know my thoughts, and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me into the way everlasting." The instance of deceit alluded to, is that of Ananias and Sapphira, who, having sold an estate, and professed to

bring the whole, kept back a part of the price. The apostle Peter charged them with having lied to the Holy Ghost, and they were both struck dead by a word. Great fear came upon all who saw these things, and none durst join them for the sake of what they could gain; but those who sincerely believed were added to the Lord in great numbers, both men and women, and many miracles were daily wrought by the apostles, so that sick people from all parts were brought to them, and all were healed of their several diseases.

The preaching of the apostles, and the miracles by which their doctrine was attested, exceedingly enraged the priests and rulers, and they again put Peter and John in prison; but the angel of the Lord by night opened the prison doors and sent forth the apostles, saying, "Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life." In the morning, when the council was assembled, they sent for the apostles; but the officers returned, saying, that they found the prison doors safely shut, and the keepers before the doors, but no man within. While they were all in great perplexity, wondering whereunto this would grow, one came and told them that the men whom they had put in prison were in the temple teaching the people. The captain and officers then went and brought them before the council, offering them no violence, for they were afraid of the people, who were convinced by their doctrine and miracles that they were sent of God, and ought not to be opposed. The apostles never hesitated to go before the rulers and councils for their Master's sake, for they had the testimony of a good conscience that they had done no evil; and the promise of their Lord was eminently fulfilled, to teach them what and how they ought to speak. On being charged by the rulers with disobedience in continuing to preach in the name of Jesus, the apostles boldly declared, that Jesus was the true Messiah, whom they slew and hanged on a tree; but whom God had exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance and forgiveness of sins; that they were the witnesses of these things, and were commanded to testify them to the people; and that the Holy Ghost also bore witness to their testimony by the miracles they were enabled to work.

The council were enraged at the courage and firmness of the apostles, and proposed to put them to death; but one of their number, named Gamaliel, advised them rather to leave the matter alone, for that if it proceeded from man opposition were needless, it would soon of itself fall to the ground; but if it proceeded from God, opposition was both

useless and dangerous: it could not be overthrown, and they would only bring upon themselves a curse by fighting against God. To this they all agreed, and having scourged the apostles, and again enjoined them to preach no more in the name of Jesus, they suffered them to depart. But they went rejoicing in the honour of suffering for the name of Christ, and continued daily to preach in the temple, and from house to house.

As the number of the disciples increased, it was found necessary to commit to other hands the distribution of the funds collected, that the apostles might be left at liberty to devote themselves entirely to their grand work of preaching the Gospel. Accordingly seven men were chosen to take charge of the poor. They were chosen by the disciples in general, and set apart by prayer and by the laying on of the hands of the apostles; the measure gave general satisfaction. The names of the persons chosen were Stephen, Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenás, and Nicolas. Of these men Stephen and Philip were the most eminent. Nicolas is supposed by some to have been the founder of the heresy of the Nicolaitans, mentioned in Revelations, chap. ii.; but this is very uncertain. At this time the church grew exceedingly, and a great number of the priests were obedient to the faith. Acts i.—vi.

QUESTIONS.

What did the disciples do when their Lord had left them?

What is recorded concerning Matthias?

In what manner was the promise of the Holy Spirit given to the disciples?

What effects were produced on those who received it?

What was the chief subject of the apostles' preaching?

What success had their preaching?

What was the first miracle they wrought in the name of Jesus Christ?

How did the Jewish priests and rulers regard the apostles?

What reasons are assigned for the general division of property which took place among the first Christians?

What was the crime of Ananias and Sapphira?

What was their punishment?

What was done to the apostles Peter and John for preaching the Gospel?

What miracle was wrought in their behalf?

Did they afterwards desist from preaching the Gospel?

Did they discover any fear or shame when taken before rulers and magistrates?

What measure became necessary as the number of the disciples greatly increased?

Who were the most famous of the seven deacons?

XVI. STEPHEN, PHILIP AND SAUL.

Stephen, one of the seven deacons, was a man eminent for faith, zeal and holy boldness, and was enabled to work great miracles among the people. With singular wisdom and courage he disputed with those who opposed the doctrines of the Gospel; and when they could not gainsay the force of truth, they got him accused before the *council of blasphemy against God and against Moses. When he was brought before the council they beheld a heavenly glory shining on his countenance, as if it had been the face of an angel; but their opposition was nowise softened, and the high-priest challenged him as to the charges brought against him. Stephen, in his defence, gave an outline of the history of the Jews, proving that they were always a stubborn and rebellious people, who had trampled on the laws of God, slain his prophets, and resisted his Holy Spirit; and that now they had filled up the measure of their iniquities by killing the Prince of life, whom God had sent among them. This so exasperated the audience that they abruptly interrupted his speech, and gnashed on him with their teeth. But Stephen looked upward, and declared that he beheld the glory of God in heaven, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. They then cried out against him as a blasphemer, dragged him out of the city, and stoned him to death. In his dying agonies he prayed for his murderers, saying, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge;" and having committed his departing spirit into the hands of the Lord Jesus, he fell asleep. Stephen was honourably buried, and greatly lamented by the disciples.

Among the spectators of Stephen's *martyrdom was a young man named Saul, a zealous *Pharisee of the tribe of Benjamin. He gave his voice for the death of Stephen, and kept the raiment of those who actually slew him. After this Saul continued grievously to persecute the church, sparing no pains to find out any who were Christians, and committing them to prison, both men and women. His fierce and cruel rage was the means of scattering the disciples who had hitherto dwelt together at Jerusalem. They were driven by persecution to strange cities throughout Judea and Samaria; but wherever they went they preached the gospel, and sinners were converted unto God; so that the very circumstances which seemed to threaten the destruction of the church were overruled to its extension and establishment.

Philip, one of the seven deacons, went to the city of Samaria and preached Christ, confirming his doctrine by

miracles. Many sick persons were healed, and many devils cast out, and in consequence many believed and were baptized, and there was great joy in that city.

Among those who were baptized was Simon Magus, a celebrated *sorcerer, who had long deluded the people. He appears to have professed the Christian faith, not because it had operated on his heart and brought him to true repentance and a love of holiness, but because he thought he could gain more by it than by the pursuits he had formerly followed. His hypocrisy and covetousness were soon brought to light.

The *apostles still remained together at Jerusalem; but when they heard that Samaria had received the word of God, Peter and John came down to visit them, and to pray for the new converts, that they might receive the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost, which were only bestowed by laying on of the hands of the apostles. When Simon Magus saw what miracles were wrought by those who received this power, he offered money to the apostles, saying, "Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay my hands he may receive the Holy Ghost." But Peter indignantly rebuked him, saying, "Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money. Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter; for thy heart is not right in the sight of God." "I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity." Peter nevertheless exhorted him to repent of his wickedness, and to pray God, if perhaps the thought of his heart might be forgiven him; a proof that the worst are not to be regarded as beyond the reach of mercy while they remain on earth, where the Son of man has power to forgive sins. After this the apostles returned to Jerusalem, preaching the gospel in the different places through which they passed.

After their departure Philip was directed by the angel of the Lord to go into the southern road through the desert between Jerusalem and Gaza. As he went he met with the treasurer of Candace, queen of Ethiopia. Being a proselyte to the Jewish religion, he had been to Jerusalem to worship; and, on his return, sat in his chariot reading in the holy Scriptures the prophecies of Isaiah concerning the Messiah. (Isa. liii.) The Spirit intimated to Philip that he should go and address himself to this person: he did so, and asked him if he understood the application of the passage he was reading. The Ethiopian confessed his ignorance, and desired that Philip would come and sit with him. He did so, and explained to him the exact fulfilment of these Scriptures in

Jesus of Nazareth. He was fully convinced of the truth of what he heard, and as they came to water he desired to be baptized, to which Philip readily consented, saying, "If thou believest with all thine heart thou mayest." No sooner was this sacred ordinance administered than the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, and the Ethiopian saw him no more; but he went on his way rejoicing in the Saviour to whom his views had been directed. As for Philip he was found at Azotus (or Ashdod), a city of the Philistines; and going on from thence he preached the Gospel in the different places through which he passed until he came to Cesarea.

All this time Saul continued bitterly to persecute the church; and not content with venting his bitter rage on the saints at Jerusalem, he obtained authority from the high-priest to go and search for them in Damascus also. As he drew near the gates of that city he was suddenly arrested by a bright light shining around him from heaven, and a voice accosting him in his own language, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest; it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks (or to resist truth to thy own destruction); and he, trembling and astonished, said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" Thus was this obdurate rebel, through the riches of divine grace, melted and brought to submit in humble penitence at the feet of sovereign mercy; and from that time his whole life was devoted to preaching the faith he had so zealously laboured to destroy, and in honouring that Saviour whom he had so bitterly opposed. Having lost his sight under this miraculous visitation, Saul was led by the hand into Damascus, where he remained three days without food. After that Ananias, a Christian at Damascus, was commanded by the Lord to go to Saul, restore him to sight, baptize him, and regard him as a brother.

[Most probably, during these three days of blindness, the Lord Jesus communicated to Saul that knowledge of the Gospel which he often afterwards said he received immediately from the Lord. (2 Cor. xi. Gal. i. ii.) He was, in consequence, placed upon a footing with the rest of the apostles, and was indeed the most laborious and successful of them all.]

Saul immediately began to preach the Gospel in Damascus; but all that heard him were greatly amazed at the change which had taken place in him. He afterwards went into Arabia and preached, and then returned to Damascus, where

the Jews lay in wait to kill him; but their plot was discovered, and the disciples let him down by the wall of the city in a basket, and so he escaped. Three years afterwards he went to visit the disciples at Jerusalem. At first they were timid and suspicious, fearing that he was not in reality a disciple, but that he assumed the garb of friendship the better to carry on his persecuting designs. But Saul was known to Barnabas, who introduced him to Peter and James, and related to them his conversion and subsequent conduct; and then they gladly gave him the right hand of fellowship. He remained with them fifteen days, preaching and disputing with the Grecian Jews, who went about to kill him. This being known to the brethren, they conveyed him hastily to Cesarea Philippi, whence he removed to Tarsus, his native city. Then the churches had rest from persecution, and were multiplied greatly and established in faith and holiness. Acts vii.—ix.; also xxii. xxvi. 2 Cor. xi. xii. and Gal. i.

QUESTIONS.

- What was Stephen's character?
- On what charge was he brought before the council?
- How did he address the priests and rulers?
- What extraordinary manifestation was granted him during his trial?
- In what manner did he die?
- What spirit did he discover?
- Who was one of the spectators of Stephen's *martyrdom, and what was his character?
- What took place among the disciples in consequence of persecution?
- Did this hinder the spread of the Gospel?
- Whither did Philip go?
- What success attended his ministry?
- What was the character of Simon Magus?
- How was his hypocrisy detected?
- For what purpose was Philip sent to the road from Jerusalem to Gaza?
- What was the Ethiopian reading when Philip met him?
- How did Philip apply the prophecy?
- Was the Ethiopian convinced that Jesus was the Christ?
- Where did Philip go afterwards?
- Did Saul live and die a persecutor?
- When Saul became a Christian and preached the Gospel, how did the Jews treat him?

XVII. PETER, SAUL, BARNABAS, AND HEROD.

After Peter's return with John from Samaria he went through the neighbouring country. At Lydda he miraculously healed a man named Eneas, who had been afflicted with the palsy eight years. In consequence of this, many of the people of Lydda and Saron turned to the Lord.

About this time, a disciple, named Dorcas, or Tabitha, lived at Joppa, a few miles distant from Saron. She was eminent for works of charity, and, in consequence, greatly beloved and lamented. Peter was immediately sent for, and having prayed, he was permitted to restore her to life, to the great joy of those who knew her, and to the spread of the Gospel among others. Peter then remained at Joppa, lodging in the house of Simon, a tanner, until he was called thence to "open the door of faith unto the Gentiles."

The Gospel has one grand feature which distinguishes it from the Jewish religion. That was confined to one nation only; but the Gospel was designed to be "made known to all nations, for the obedience of faith:"—and our Lord had repeatedly intimated, and even expressly declared, that such was his intention; but the apostles seem not at all to have understood their duty in this respect, until it was forced upon them by special revelation.

At Cesarea dwelt Cornelius, a Gentile *centurion, who was not only upright and charitable in his deportment among men, but also humble, devout, and desirous of divine instruction. As he prayed, an angel was sent to encourage him, and to direct him to send to Joppa for the apostle Peter, who should farther instruct him in the way of salvation. Cornelius immediately sent two of his household servants, and a devout soldier, to beg that Peter would come unto him. Meanwhile, Peter also was prepared, by divine revelation, for the visit he was to receive. As Peter was on the house-top, praying, and being at the time very hungry, he fell into a *trance, and saw a *vision. A vessel, with all kinds of beasts, fowls, and reptiles appeared before him, and a voice directed him to kill, and satisfy his hunger. By the Jewish laws, many distinctions were made between animals, as clean or unclean; that is, such as were or were not allowed for food and sacrifice; and Peter had very scrupulously observed those laws. But, now the voice told him, that what God had cleansed, he should not regard as unclean; thus intimating, that all those distinctions about things in themselves indifferent, were now done away; and especially that the Gentiles, whom the Jews had been accustomed to regard as unclean and despicable, were placed upon exactly the same level with themselves as to common society, and as to the privileges of the Gospel. At this moment, the messengers arrived, and Peter was admonished to go with them, nothing doubting.

On his arrival at Cesarea, he found a considerable assembly gathered in the house of Cornelius; and having received

from his lips a statement of the circumstances which led to his application, Peter proceeded to acknowledge his conviction, that God is no respecter of persons; but that every sincere and humble inquirer is accepted of Him, and admitted to share the privileges of His mercy in Jesus Christ. Peter then related to them the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, whom it was the business of the apostles to proclaim as the Saviour of sinners, and the Judge of quick and dead. As he thus spake, the Holy Ghost came upon his Gentile hearers, in the same manner as at first on the disciples, to the great astonishment of Peter and the Jewish brethren who accompanied him. As it was thus made evident that Gentiles were admitted to receive the blessings of the Gospel, Peter hesitated not to admit them to its ordinances. They were immediately baptized.

When the other apostles and disciples in Judea heard that Peter had been among Gentiles, they charged him with having broken the law; but when he related to them the circumstances by which the path of duty was made known to him, they were not only satisfied with the steps he had taken, but rejoiced and glorified God, saying, "Then hath God granted to the Gentiles repentance unto life."

Meanwhile, the other disciples, scattered by persecution, had carried the Gospel wherever they went, not only through Judea and Samaria, but as far as Phenice, Cyprus, and Antioch. At first, they confined their message to the Jews and *proselytes dwelling in those places; but, when they heard of Peter's receiving Cornelius, they spoke also to the Grecians at Antioch, preaching the Lord Jesus, and a great multitude believed and turned unto the Lord. On hearing of this, the church at Jerusalem sent Barnabas, (mentioned, p. 206, 212,) to visit the disciples at Antioch. He rejoiced greatly in the grace of God manifested to them, and exhorted them that with purpose of heart they should cleave unto the Lord. His visit was greatly blessed, and much people were added unto the Lord. He also went to Tarsus to seek Saul, and brought him to Antioch, where they continued above a year, assembling with the church and teaching the people; and the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.

During this time, a prophet from Judea, named Agabus, visited Antioch, and foretold a grievous famine. In prospect of this, the Gentile converts cheerfully contributed for the relief of their brethren in Judea, and sent their gifts by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.

At this time, persecution against the Christians was re-

newed by Herod Agrippa. This Herod was grandson to Herod the Great, who slaughtered the infants at Bethlehem, (p. 157,) and nephew to Herod Antipas, who caused John the Baptist to be beheaded, (p. 172.) He slew with the sword James, the son of Zebedee and brother of John, and apprehended Peter during the feast of the Passover. Peter was committed to prison under a guard of four *quaternions of soldiers, and was to be brought forth to public execution as soon as the feast was over. Unceasing prayer was made in the church on his behalf; and in the night previous to his intended execution, he was awakened and released by an angel, and conducted out of the prison. He went to the house of Mary, the mother of John Mark, where many were gathered together, praying for him. At first they could scarcely believe for joy. When they were somewhat calmed, he related to them the circumstances of his deliverance, and sent tidings thereof to James (the brother or near relation of Jesus) and to the brethren.

Herod was greatly enraged at the defeat of his intentions, and commanded the guards to be put to death. Shortly afterwards, Herod went down to Cæsarea, and there received blasphemous adoration; on which, an angel of the Lord smote him with an horrible disease,—he was consumed of worms, and expired. Thus the Lord hath ordained his arrows against the persecutors; but he knoweth how to deliver them that are his.

The Gospel continued to spread; and Saul and Barnabas having discharged their commission at Jerusalem, returned to Antioch, taken with them John Mark. Acts ix.—xii.

QUESTIONS.

- What miracle was wrought by Peter at Lydda?
- What miracle was wrought by Peter at Joppa?
- What was the character of Dorcas?
- What were the circumstances that led Peter to go to Cesarea?
- How came Cornelius the Gentile to send for him?
- What effect had the preaching of Peter on Cornelius and his friends?
- Was Peter blamed by the other disciples for going among Gentiles?
- Were any more Gentiles brought to embrace the gospel?
- What instance of liberality was shewn by the Gentile converts to their brethren in Judea?
- Where were the disciples first called Christians?
- What king began to persecute the Christians about this time?
- Which of the apostles did Herod slay?
- Which did he imprison with intention to put to death?
- Was there any thing remarkable in the circumstances of Peter's deliverance?
- What befell Herod shortly afterwards?

XVIII. ST. PAUL'S FIRST APOSTOLICAL JOURNEY AMONG THE GENTILES.

In the church at Antioch there were many *prophets and teachers. From among them, Saul and Barnabas were selected, by express revelation, and sent to preach the Gospel to the remoter Gentiles. Having been set apart with fasting and prayer, they went to Seleucia, and thence to Cyprus, of which isle Barnabas was a native. At Salamis, on the eastern part of the island, they preached to the Jews, and thence went to Paphos, on the western coast, where Sergius Paulus, the deputy-governor, desired to hear them. His attention seemed to be awakened by the truths of the Gospel. But the preaching of the apostles was withstood by Elymas, or Bar-jesus, a *sorcerer, who endeavoured to turn away the deputy from believing the Gospel. Then Saul, (who is also, and henceforth, generally called Paul,) under the immediate influence and authority of the Holy Ghost, struck him with temporary blindness. This miracle fully convinced the *proconsul or deputy, and he embraced the cause of Christ. From Paphos, they went to Perga in Pamphylia, where Mark deserted them, and returned to Jerusalem. They then proceeded to Antioch, in Pisidia, where the rulers of the synagogue invited them on the Sabbath-day to address the people. On this occasion, Paul briefly recapitulated the dealings of God with Abraham and his descendants to the time of David, and proved, from many prophecies, that Jesus, whom the Jews had crucified, was the true Messiah. He also preached the doctrine of forgiveness of sins, and justification through faith in Christ, and declared the danger of rejecting Him.

On the Jews quitting the synagogue, the Gentiles desired that these things might be repeated to them on the following Sabbath; and many of the Jews and *proselytes visited Paul and Barnabas, and received further instructions. But the unbelieving Jews contradicted and blasphemed. The apostles testified against them and turned to the Gentiles, many of whom believed. But the Jews stirred up persecution against the apostles, and drove them out of the territories. They shook off the dust from their feet, (as the Lord had commanded, Mark vi. 11.) and departed to Iconium.

At Iconium many, both Jews and Gentiles, were convinced by the preaching of the apostles,—the Jews still opposed them; but they preached boldly, and confirmed their doctrine by miracles. Being aware that the Gentiles and Jews had conspired to stone them, they fled to Lystra and Derbe,

cities of Lycaonia, where they preached with good success. There they miraculously cured a man lame from his birth. The people, supposing them to be gods, attempted to worship and do sacrifice to them, and could scarcely be restrained even when the apostles preached to them the true God.

Some Jews from Antioch and Iconium, having followed the apostles to Lycaonia, prejudiced the people against them, and persuaded them to stone Paul, who was taken out of the city for dead; but he miraculously revived, and the next day departed thence, and passed through many cities where they had before preached, confirming the souls of the disciples, warning them that Christians must expect much tribulation, and commending them to God in fervent prayer. They then passed through Pisidia, Pamphylia, and Perga, to Attalia, on the coast of the Mediterranean sea, and thence returned to Antioch in Syria, and remained some time with the disciples.

During their abode at Antioch, some Jewish believers attempted to enforce on the Gentile converts the observance of the *ceremonial law of Moses. Paul and Barnabas withstood the attempt; and at length went up, accompanied by some other brethren, to consult the apostles and elders at Jerusalem. On their way through Phenice and Samaria, they rejoiced the brethren, by announcing the conversion of the Gentiles, which they also declared in Jerusalem. Some believers of the sect of the *Pharisees still pleaded for the observance of the ceremonial law; but Peter appealed to the case of Cornelius, as a proof that penitent believers, whether Jews or Gentiles, were alike acceptable to God. James called their attention to ancient prophecies, which intimate the bringing in of the Gentiles; and on the whole it was agreed that the Gentiles ought not to be burdened with ceremonial observances, but should be recommended to abstain from some things, which, though commonly practised among the Gentiles, were odious in the sight of the Jews, and some of them indeed, in themselves, grossly criminal. Together with Barnabas and Saul, Judas, Barsabas and Silas were sent as the bearers of this communication to the Gentile churches. After much pleasant and profitable intercourse, Barsabas returned to Jerusalem, but Silas remained with Paul and Barnabas. Acts xiii.—xv.

After this, we know very little of the history of St. Peter. His first epistle was written about this time, and the second many years afterwards, in his old age. Ancient historians inform us, that he was crucified with his head downwards.

as an expression of shame for having denied his Lord and Master. This was about the year 66.

QUESTIONS.

How came Saul and Barnabas to leave Antioch?
 Whom did they meet with in Cyprus desirous of hearing the Gospel?
 By whom were the apostles withstood?
 What was the result?
 When Paul preached in the synagogue at Antioch, what did the Gentiles desire?
 How did the Jews act?
 What miracle was wrought in Lycaonia?
 What effect did it produce on the minds of the people?
 What happened there afterwards?
 After the return of the apostles, what disturbed the church at Antioch in Syria?
 How did Paul and Barnabas regard this question?
 What decision did the apostles at Jerusalem come to on the subject?
 What do we know farther of the apostle Peter's history?

XIX. ST. PAUL'S SECOND APOSTOLICAL JOURNEY AMONG THE GENTILES.

About two years afterwards, Paul and Barnabas proposed to visit the churches they had planted; but on account of a disagreement about John Mark, they separated. Barnabas took Mark, his nephew, as his companion to Cyprus, and Paul took Silas, and went through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches.

In Lycaonia they met with Timothy, a young disciple, highly esteemed among the brethren. He had had the privilege of a pious education, and had learnt the Scriptures in his childhood, from his pious mother and grandmother, Lois and Eunice, (2 Tim. i. 5; iii. 15): hence, he was well qualified for the work to which he was now called. Paul took him as the companion of his ministry, and his name, together with that of Silas (or Sylvanus) is joined with that of Paul in several of the epistles.

Paul and his companions passed on, communicating to the churches the decrees relative to the Gentile converts, which greatly rejoiced them. They then passed through Phrygia and Galatia with much success. Being forbidden, by a Divine intimation, at that time to preach in Asia, or to proceed from Mysia to Bithynia, they came to Troas, and there, in a vision of the night, Paul was invited to Macedonia. Accordingly, they proceeded thither, and abode in Philippi, the chief city of that part of Macedonia, and a colony. There, on the Sabbath-day, they visited a Jewish oratory by the river.

side, and addressed the worshippers. A woman, named Lydia, of the city of Thyatira, was there. The Lord opened her heart to receive the truths she heard. She believed and was baptized, as well as the other members of her household who were with her, and the apostles were invited to abide at her house.

During their stay there, they cast out of a certain damsel, a spirit of *divination. This greatly enraged her masters, who had been accustomed to make a gain of her. They stirred up the people and the magistrates, and got Paul and Silas imprisoned, and their feet made fast in the stocks. So far from being discouraged by persecution, at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises to God, and suddenly a great earthquake opened the prison doors, and loosed all the bonds of the prisoners. The jailor, in the utmost consternation, fell at the feet of Paul and Silas, and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" They directed him to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ as the Saviour of sinners, and preached the word of the Lord to him and to all that were in his house: and he and all his were baptized immediately, believing and rejoicing in God.

The day following, the magistrates commanded Paul and Silas to be released; but they, as Roman citizens, refused to depart unless personally requested by the magistrates; which being complied with, they visited the brethren in the house of Lydia, and departed. This was the foundation of the church to which St. Paul addressed one of his epistles.

Paul and his company then proceeded to Thessalonica, where Paul reasoned with the Jews in the synagogue three Sabbath-days, shewing the fulfillment of the Scriptures in Jesus of Nazareth. Some were convinced; but the unbelieving Jews gathered a mob, set the city in an uproar, and assaulted the house of Jason, where they expected to find Paul and Silas: not finding them, they took Jason and others before the magistrates, charging them with treason. But the magistrates took security of them, and released them. Paul and Silas then went to Berea, where they preached. The Bereans discovered much candour and greatness of mind in searching the Scriptures, and by them examining the apostle's doctrine; in consequence of which many believed. But the Jews from Thessalonica followed the apostles to Berea, and excited the minds of the people against them. Paul then went to Athens, leaving Silas and Timothy at Berea; but he soon after sent for them to follow him. While waiting at Athens for his companions, Paul was deeply

affected at witnessing the idolatry of that polite city, and he discoursed with the Jews and others. The *Epicurean and *Ethic, or *Stoic philosophers, attacked him, and he was brought to the *Areopagus, and questioned concerning his doctrine. From Mars-hill he addressed the people, declaring unto them the true God, whom they ignorantly worshipped. He asserted the spirituality of God in opposition to their graven images; the universal dominion of God in opposition to the heathen idea of different gods ruling over different provinces, and the claim of these things on the attention of all who heard them, seeing that God would judge all mankind, of which He had given an assurance in the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. As Paul thus spake, some mocked, but others believed,—in particular Dionysius the *Areopagite, and a woman named Damaris. Though not mentioned in the Acts, it is concluded, that when Silas and Timothy arrived at Athens, and brought tidings of the afflictions and persecutions endured by the Thessalonian converts, Paul sent back Timothy to establish and comfort them. (1 Thess. i. 6; ii. 14—16; iii. 1—5.) Paul then departed to Corinth, where he found Aquilla and Priscilla, Jews from Rome, and converts to the Christian faith. He lodged with them, and wrought, for they were of the same occupation,—that of tent makers. On the Sabbath-days, he preached in the synagogues, and wrought many miracles. (See 1 Cor. i. 6, 7; ii. 4, 5; xii. 4—11; xiv.; 2 Cor. xi. 5; xii. 12, 13.)

When Timothy came to Paul at Corinth, and brought tidings of the steadfastness of the Thessalonian converts, the Apostle was greatly comforted, and preached yet more boldly that Jesus was the Christ. The Jews opposed and blasphemed; then Paul declared himself clear of their blood, and turned to the Gentiles. Quitting the synagogue, he taught in the house of Justus, and many believed and were baptized, among whom were Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, and all his house. Paul wrote the First Epistle to the Thessalonians to express his joy, on hearing by Timothy of their faith and steadfastness, and shortly afterwards, the Second. He also wrote the Epistle to the Galatians about the same time.

When the Jews opposed and persecuted Paul, he was encouraged in a vision of the night with assurances that the Lord would protect him from his enemies, and give success to his ministry. Accordingly, he remained at Corinth a year and a half, during which time a numerous church was

raised, the members of which were eminent for spiritual gifts. The Jews, enraged at Paul's success, seized upon him, and accused him before Gallio, the *proconsul of Achaia: but he, perceiving it to be a religious rather than a civil question, forbore to interfere with it. Sosthenes was beaten before the judgment-seat; yet even then Gallio refused to regard it.

After remaining yet longer at Corinth, Paul set off for Jerusalem, accompanied by Aquila and Priscilla. On arriving at Ephesus, He reasoned with the Jews. During this visit, the church was formed to whom the epistle of St. Paul was afterwards addressed; also that of the Saviour, (Rev. ii. 1—7.) The apostle was pressed to remain longer at Ephesus, but being desirous of reaching Jerusalem for the approaching *passover, he took his leave, promising to return. He left Aquila and Priscilla,—sailed from Ephesus,—landed at Cæsarea,—went up to Jerusalem, and presented to the church there the contributions he had raised for them among the Gentile churches.

From Jerusalem Paul went to Antioch, and tarried awhile; after which he went regularly through the churches of Galatia and Phrygia, which is called his third apostolical journey. Acts xvi.—xviii.

QUESTIONS.

How long did Paul and Barnabas remain at Antioch after their return from Jerusalem?

When they next went out, why did they not travel together?

What young minister afterwards accompanied Paul and Silas?

What do we know of Timothy's early history?

What is mentioned concerning Lydia?

Where did Lydia's conversion take place?

Did any thing else remarkable happen at Philippi?

How were Paul and his company treated at Thessalonica?

What is said of the Bereans?

What were the chief topics of Paul's speech at Athens?

With whom did Paul lodge at Corinth?

When the Jews at Corinth opposed Paul, in what manner was he encouraged?

How long did he remain at Corinth?

How did Gallio treat the Jews who accused Paul?

Where did Paul and his friends go next?

With what particular object did Paul visit Jerusalem at that time?

XX. APOLLOS.—PAUL'S HISTORY UP TO HIS APPREHENSION IN JERUSALEM.

While St. Paul was passing through Galatia and Phrygia, Apollos, a native of Alexandria, came to Ephesus. He was

a man of fervent zeal, eloquent address, and great knowledge in the Holy Scriptures; and he taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John. Aquila and Priscilla instructed him further in the truths of the Gospel, and then he settled in Corinth, where he became eminently successful.

While Apollos was at Corinth, Paul again visited Ephesus, and remained there three years. He found there some disciples quite ignorant of the effusion of the Holy Spirit, having been baptized into John's baptism. Having further instructed them, and administered to them Christian baptism, he laid his hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost, and were enabled to speak with other tongues, and *prophecy. For three months, Paul preached the Gospel in the synagogue; but afterwards, being greatly opposed, he relinquished that, and for two years debated in the school of Tyrannus. During this period, the name of the Lord Jesus became extensively known in Asia, and in all probability the rest of the seven churches were formed, to which our Lord's messages were addressed. Rev. ii. iii.

Paul having wrought special miracles in Ephesus, seven *exorcists, the sons of Sceva, a Jew, attempted to imitate them, and adjured an evil spirit, in the name of Jesus, whom Paul preached; but the possessed man fell on them, beat them, and obliged them all to flee. By this occurrence many were convinced; and among those who believed, some having formerly had recourse to *magical arts, freely confessed their deeds, and burned their unlawful books, the price of which was found to be fifty thousand pieces of silver. Such was the constraining influence of the word of God.

At this time, St. Paul purposed to pass through Macedonia and Achaia, visiting the churches at Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, Athens, Corinth, &c. and then to go on to Jerusalem, and afterwards to Rome. With this view he sent forward into Macedonia, to prepare the minds of the disciples for raising a contribution on behalf of the poor saints at Jerusalem, which he would collect as he passed on his journey. This journey, however, was considerably delayed, and Paul remained some time longer at Ephesus.

Not long afterwards, St. Paul was assaulted by Demetrius, a silversmith at Ephesus. His trade consisted chiefly in making little silver shrines, images, or models, of the famous temple of Diana there, which were sold to the worshippers. When many were brought to believe the Gospel, the demand for these idolatrous fooleries in a great measure ceased.

Demetrius and others of his trade feared that he had influenced the minds of the populace. While, for the space of two months, cried out, 'Great is Diana of the Ephesians.' Aristarchus and Gaius, two of Paul's companions, were seized, and the assailants rushed into the market. Paul had the intention of entering, but his friends kept him back. The tumult was so great with much difficulty approached the judges. The occasion proved to be the encounter to which the apostle alluded when he says, "After the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus." 1 Cor. xv. 32. Some think the apostle was exposed to be devoured by wild beasts and miraculously delivered; others that he compared the ferocious fury of men to that of wild beasts. The First Epistle to the Corinthians was written during this period. Soon after the apostle left Corinth, many irregularities broke out in that church. A bad spirit prevailed of mutually slandering one another and depreciating another: some grew impatient and were provoked and convicted at. The church was in the apostle's hands, leaving him on some particular point. In the hope of giving the opportunity of repenting what he knew to be wrong among them. This epistle is distinguished for a noble defence of the doctrine of the resurrection. Rom. vi.

On leaving Ephesus, Paul departed for Macedonia at Thracia, by the way. Paul proposed to have Timotheus accompany him from Corinth, but being disappointed on account of various delay. In Macedonia he met with Titus and receiving good accounts from Corinth of the effects of his former epistle, he wrote the Second Epistle to the Corinthians, and sent it by Titus. This Epistle is contained in Rom. xvi. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 110, 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 134, 135, 136, 137, 138, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150, 151, 152, 153, 154, 155, 156, 157, 158, 159, 160, 161, 162, 163, 164, 165, 166, 167, 168, 169, 170, 171, 172, 173, 174, 175, 176, 177, 178, 179, 180, 181, 182, 183, 184, 185, 186, 187, 188, 189, 190, 191, 192, 193, 194, 195, 196, 197, 198, 199, 200, 201, 202, 203, 204, 205, 206, 207, 208, 209, 210, 211, 212, 213, 214, 215, 216, 217, 218, 219, 220, 221, 222, 223, 224, 225, 226, 227, 228, 229, 230, 231, 232, 233, 234, 235, 236, 237, 238, 239, 240, 241, 242, 243, 244, 245, 246, 247, 248, 249, 250, 251, 252, 253, 254, 255, 256, 257, 258, 259, 260, 261, 262, 263, 264, 265, 266, 267, 268, 269, 270, 271, 272, 273, 274, 275, 276, 277, 278, 279, 280, 281, 282, 283, 284, 285, 286, 287, 288, 289, 290, 291, 292, 293, 294, 295, 296, 297, 298, 299, 300, 301, 302, 303, 304, 305, 306, 307, 308, 309, 310, 311, 312, 313, 314, 315, 316, 317, 318, 319, 320, 321, 322, 323, 324, 325, 326, 327, 328, 329, 330, 331, 332, 333, 334, 335, 336, 337, 338, 339, 340, 341, 342, 343, 344, 345, 346, 347, 348, 349, 350, 351, 352, 353, 354, 355, 356, 357, 358, 359, 360, 361, 362, 363, 364, 365, 366, 367, 368, 369, 370, 371, 372, 373, 374, 375, 376, 377, 378, 379, 380, 381, 382, 383, 384, 385, 386, 387, 388, 389, 390, 391, 392, 393, 394, 395, 396, 397, 398, 399, 400, 401, 402, 403, 404, 405, 406, 407, 408, 409, 410, 411, 412, 413, 414, 415, 416, 417, 418, 419, 420, 421, 422, 423, 424, 425, 426, 427, 428, 429, 430, 431, 432, 433, 434, 435, 436, 437, 438, 439, 440, 441, 442, 443, 444, 445, 446, 447, 448, 449, 450, 451, 452, 453, 454, 455, 456, 457, 458, 459, 460, 461, 462, 463, 464, 465, 466, 467, 468, 469, 470, 471, 472, 473, 474, 475, 476, 477, 478, 479, 480, 481, 482, 483, 484, 485, 486, 487, 488, 489, 490, 491, 492, 493, 494, 495, 496, 497, 498, 499, 500, 501, 502, 503, 504, 505, 506, 507, 508, 509, 510, 511, 512, 513, 514, 515, 516, 517, 518, 519, 520, 521, 522, 523, 524, 525, 526, 527, 528, 529, 530, 531, 532, 533, 534, 535, 536, 537, 538, 539, 540, 541, 542, 543, 544, 545, 546, 547, 548, 549, 550, 551, 552, 553, 554, 555, 556, 557, 558, 559, 560, 561, 562, 563, 564, 565, 566, 567, 568, 569, 570, 571, 572, 573, 574, 575, 576, 577, 578, 579, 580, 581, 582, 583, 584, 585, 586, 587, 588, 589, 590, 591, 592, 593, 594, 595, 596, 597, 598, 599, 600, 601, 602, 603, 604, 605, 606, 607, 608, 609, 610, 611, 612, 613, 614, 615, 616, 617, 618, 619, 620, 621, 622, 623, 624, 625, 626, 627, 628, 629, 630, 631, 632, 633, 634, 635, 636, 637, 638, 639, 640, 641, 642, 643, 644, 645, 646, 647, 648, 649, 650, 651, 652, 653, 654, 655, 656, 657, 658, 659, 660, 661, 662, 663, 664, 665, 666, 667, 668, 669, 670, 671, 672, 673, 674, 675, 676, 677, 678, 679, 680, 681, 682, 683, 684, 685, 686, 687, 688, 689, 690, 691, 692, 693, 694, 695, 696, 697, 698, 699, 700, 701, 702, 703, 704, 705, 706, 707, 708, 709, 710, 711, 712, 713, 714, 715, 716, 717, 718, 719, 720, 721, 722, 723, 724, 725, 726, 727, 728, 729, 730, 731, 732, 733, 734, 735, 736, 737, 738, 739, 740, 741, 742, 743, 744, 745, 746, 747, 748, 749, 750, 751, 752, 753, 754, 755, 756, 757, 758, 759, 760, 761, 762, 763, 764, 765, 766, 767, 768, 769, 770, 771, 772, 773, 774, 775, 776, 777, 778, 779, 780, 781, 782, 783, 784, 785, 786, 787, 788, 789, 790, 791, 792, 793, 794, 795, 796, 797, 798, 799, 800, 801, 802, 803, 804, 805, 806, 807, 808, 809, 810, 811, 812, 813, 814, 815, 816, 817, 818, 819, 820, 821, 822, 823

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intended departure, and continued his speech till midnight. A young man named Eutychus being overcome with sleep, fell down, and was taken up dead; but Paul came down and miraculously restored him to life. He then continued his discourse, and broke bread with the disciples.

On the morrow they departed. As the apostle hastened to be at Jerusalem for the feast of Pentecost, he did not call at Ephesus, but sent for the elders of that church to meet him at Miletus, where he gave them a most solemn and affectionate farewell address, telling them that they should see his face no more, but expressing the most magnanimous willingness to meet bonds, imprisonment, or death, so that he might promote the glory of Christ, and finish his course with honour and joy. After this address he kneeled down and prayed with them all; and they all wept sore, and fell on Paul's neck and kissed him, sorrowing most of all for his testimony that they should see his face no more.

The apostle and his company then proceeded on their voyage towards Cesarea. On the way they landed at Tyre, and remained seven days. Some of the disciples there warned Paul of the dangers that awaited him at Jerusalem. He, however, proceeded; and taking leave, he prayed with them and their families on the sea shore. At Cesarea, he abode in the house of Philip the evangelist (see p. 211), whose four daughters prophesied. Agabus also, a prophet from Judea, predicted, by a sign, Paul's imprisonment at Jerusalem, and his being delivered into the hands of the Gentiles. The disciples, in consequence, dissuaded him from proceeding, but he again declared his readiness even to die in the sacred cause. They then held their peace, saying, "The will of the Lord be done." Some of the brethren from Cesarea accompanied Paul and his friends, and conducted them to the house of Mnason.

At Jerusalem, Paul and his company were cordially received by the brethren: they met at the house of the apostle James, and there Paul related the success of his ministry among the *Gentiles. The brethren warned Paul that the Jews had a strong prejudice against him, from an idea that he despised the law of Moses. To counteract this, they advised him to join in some ceremonial observances, in themselves indifferent, to which he agreed; but, so far from success attending this measure, a stronger prejudice was excited, for a rumour was spread that Paul had taken *Gentiles into the temple, and profaned the holy place. A tumult was raised, and they were about to kill Paul, but

were prevented by Lysias, the chief captain, who rescued him from their hands, and took him into custody. Supposing Paul to have been guilty of some great crime, he commanded him to be bound with a chain and conveyed to the castle, the people violently demanding his death. Acts xviii.—xxi.

QUESTIONS.

What was the character of Apollos?

In what respect were Aquila and Priscilla useful to him?

Where did he afterwards settle?

In what city did the apostle Paul reside for three years?

Did any particular success attend his ministry there?

Why did Demetrius assault Paul?

What was the name of the goddess worshipped at Ephesus?

Where did Paul go when he left Ephesus?

Why did not the apostle sail from Greece to Syria as he had intended?

What particular circumstance took place at Troas?

Of whom did Paul take leave at Miletus?

What rendered the parting very affecting?

What advice was given to Paul at Cesarea?

How did he receive it?

What was done by Paul, at the advice of his friends, to meet the prejudices of the Jews at Jerusalem?

How did it succeed?

On what suspicion was Paul apprehended?

XXI. ST. PAUL'S DEFENCES AND IMPRISONMENT.

As the multitude cried out, "Away with him," Paul requested permission to speak for himself. Lysias demanded whether he was not a seditious Egyptian impostor? Paul then declared his birth and citizenship; and having obtained permission to proceed, he related the circumstances of his education,—his former bigotry against the Christians, his remarkable conversion and call to preach the Gospel. When he spoke of being sent to the Gentiles, the people became enraged, and declared that he ought not to be suffered to live. Lysias then commanded him to be examined by scourging, but he pleaded his privilege as a Roman citizen, which rendered it unlawful to scourge him, unless proved guilty. The next day he was examined before the Jewish council: when he declared his innocence, the high priest unjustly commanded him to be smitten, which Paul sharply rebuked; but when informed from whom the command issued, he apologized, being well aware of the command of God, "Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people." Perceiving that part of the council were *Pharisees and part *Sadducees, he declared himself a *Pharisee, still zealous for

the fundamental principles of that sect,—such as state, and the resurrection of the dead. They then contending among themselves, and Lysias, fearing, commanded the soldiers to take Paul to the castle. That night he was encouraged by a *vision of the Lord, in which he was told that he must testify of his name in Rome. The soldiers, having bound themselves by an oath to kill Paul, waited for him; but the conspiracy being discovered by one of Paul, he informed Lysias, who sent him by a messenger to Cesarea, to Felix, the governor of the province.

The high-priest and elders went to Cesarea against Paul, and took with them an orator named Tertullus, who grossly flattered the wicked governor, Felix, and justly accused Paul of *heresy, *sedition, and profaning the temple. Paul being called upon to answer, he denied the charges, and gave an account of his conversion. Felix deferred the matter till Lyodius should come down and give further information; and committed to the care of a centurion, with liberty to converse with his friends.

After some time, Felix, accompanied by his wife (a Jewess), sent for Paul to hear him concerning the kingdom of Christ. On this occasion, Paul reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come; and Felix was troubled under what he said, but dismissed Paul, saying, I will hear thee again at a more convenient season. Convinced of Paul's innocence, he kept him a prisoner, but allowed the Jews to visit him, and in the hope that Paul's friends would send money for his release. After two years, Felix sent the government to Festus, and left Paul still in custody.

The new governor, Festus, going up to Jerusalem, the Jews again desired to have him brought there, saying that they would kill him by the way; but Festus commanded that he should be brought to him at Cesarea. They accordingly came with many heavy charges against Paul, which he denied. Festus then, to please the Jews, proposed to him a new trial at Jerusalem, which he declined, and desired that he might be sent to Cæsar, that is, the tribunal of the emperor at Rome.

Shortly after this, Agrippa, king of Chalcis, and Bernice, came to visit Festus. He mentioned to them the case of Paul, and Agrippa desired to hear him himself. When they were assembled with great pomp, and Paul was brought before them, Paul, in his defence, stated, as before, his conversion to Christianity,—his exclusion from the Jews, and the enmity of the Jews to him.

As he asserted the consistency of the Gospel with the ancient declarations of Moses and the prophets, Festus interrupted the discourse by ascribing Paul's earnestness to madness, brought on by excess of study; but Paul defended himself against the charge, and appealed to Agrippa, who knew the writings of the prophets. Agrippa declared himself almost persuaded to be a Christian; and all agreed that Paul had done nothing worthy of bonds or of death, and that he might have been set at liberty if he had not appealed to Cæsar.

Soon afterwards, Paul was sent to Rome, accompanied by Luke and Aristarchus, and placed, with other prisoners, under the care of Julius, a centurion. They touched at Sidon, where Paul was permitted to visit his friends.

On account of the difficulty and danger of sailing at that season, Paul advised that they should winter in a harbour of Crete, but his proposal was overruled, and they proceeded. The voyage proved most disastrous. After many difficulties, they were compelled to lighten the ship of her cargo, and at length even of her tackling. Neither sun nor stars for many days appeared, and they were on the brink of despair. Paul, however, encouraged them with an assurance, that the angel of God had stood by him and told him that all their lives would be preserved, though the ship would be lost. In the extremity of danger, some of the sailors attempted to desert the ship, and secure their own lives by making to the shore; but Paul forbade this, declaring that their assistance was necessary to the preservation of the rest. According to Paul's declaration, the whole crew, consisting of 276 persons, escaped.

The land they reached proved to be the island of Miletæ, or Malta. They were hospitably received by the barbarous inhabitants. While kindling a fire, a viper came out and fastened on Paul's hand: the barbarians concluded that he was a murderer, or other great criminal, who, though he had escaped the peril of the sea, was pursued by the righteous judgment of God; but he shook the creature into the fire, and felt no harm; then they supposed him to be a god. They were received and lodged at the house of Publius, the governor of the island, whose father Paul cured of a fever and bloody flux, on which many diseased persons on the island came and were healed. After three months the shipwrecked company pursued their voyage in a ship of Alexandria. They landed at Syracuse, in Sicily, and stayed three days. At Puteoli, near Naples, they found Christian brethren, and remained with them a week. As Paul advanced

towards Rome, some Christians came out a few miles to meet him, by which he was greatly encouraged. Having arrived at that city, the prisoners were given up by the centurion to the captain of the guard, and Paul was suffered to dwell in his own hired house, guarded by a soldier; most probably, according to the Roman custom, joined to him with a chain; such seems to be intimated, Acts xxviii. 20; 2 Tim. i. 16; and other places.

Soon after Paul's arrival in Rome, he called together the Jews, and preached the Gospel to them. Most of them rejected it; to them he applied the declaration of the prophet Isaiah, (Isaiah vi. 10,) and declared that the gospel, being rejected by the Jews, was sent to the Gentiles, and by them received. Thus Paul continued for two years receiving inquirers, and preaching the gospel; with which statement the history in the Acts terminates. Acts. xxi.—xxviii.

From the epistles we gather that the apostle's imprisonment was the means of extending the Gospel, and that, in quarters least to be expected. (See Phil. i. 12, 14, 18; iv. 22.) It also appears that several of the epistles were written during this imprisonment, viz. those to the Ephesians, Philipians, Colossians, Philemon, and perhaps that to the Hebrews.

We do not know by what means the apostle was set at liberty; but it certainly took place after about two years' imprisonment. After this it is supposed he travelled through Italy, and perhaps into Spain. Then he went to Judæa, accompanied by Timothy and Titus. After going his former rounds, through Syria, Galatia, and Asia Minor, Paul and Timothy visited Colosse. Timothy then remained at Ephesus, where he received Paul's First Epistle, from Macedonia.

After visiting the churches of Greece and Corinth, perhaps more than once, the apostle visited Troas, Ephesus, and Miletus, where he left his friend Trophimus sick. Early in the year 65 he again went to Rome, where he met the apostle Peter. There he was soon after imprisoned a second time. We have no particulars of this in Scripture, except what we gather from the Second Epistle to Timothy. In the year 66 the apostle was beheaded by order of Nero, one of the most wicked and cruel of the Roman emperors. Peter also suffered at the same time.

Of the other apostles we know very little. James, the relation of Jesus, who was put to death by the Jews at Jerusalem, wrote his General Epistle to the Jewish Christians a short time before his death.

Jude (who also was a kinsman of our Lord) survived

most of the other apostles. His Epistle is supposed to have been written after the destruction of Jerusalem.

John, the beloved disciple, was the youngest of the apostles, and survived them all. His Gospel was written much later than the rest, not earlier than the year 97. Under the persecuting emperor, Domitian, he is said to have been plunged into boiling oil, and taken out unhurt; but this is not mentioned in Scripture, and we cannot be sure of its truth. He was certainly banished to the isle of Patmos, where Jesus Christ appeared to him, and instructed him to write the book of Revelation.

He was recalled, after two years' banishment, by Nerva, the successor to Domitian, and afterwards wrote three epistles, one to Christians in general, one to a pious lady, and one to his friend Gaius. This apostle, it is generally admitted, closed his days at Ephesus, in good old age, after having been eminently useful in resisting error, in promoting brotherly love, and in building up the church.

QUESTIONS.

- What was the substance of Paul's defence before Lysias?
- What provoked the Jews to interrupt him in his speech?
- By what means did Paul avoid being examined by scourging?
- Where was he next examined?
- What advantage did Paul take of the division in the council, being part Pharisees and part Sadducees?
- How was he encouraged in the night?
- How was the plot of the Jews, against Paul's life, defeated?
- Before whom was Paul next examined?
- What opinions did Felix entertain of him?
- What effect was produced on the mind of Felix by Paul's address?
- Who succeeded Felix in the government?
- Why was Paul sent to be tried at Rome?
- Before whom was Paul examined after Festus became governor?
- What impression did Paul's speech make on Agrippa?
- What took place on Paul's voyage to Italy?
- On what island were they shipwrecked?
- Were any lives lost?
- How did the people of the island treat them?
- What incident gave them a bad opinion of Paul?
- How was it corrected?
- What miracle was wrought there?
- How was Paul disposed of when they reached Rome?
- What epistles were written during his imprisonment?
- What do we gather concerning his second imprisonment?
- What accounts do ancient histories give of his death?
- What is said concerning James, the relation of Jesus?
- At what time is Jude supposed to have written his epistle?
- What do we know from Scripture of the apostle John?
- What is related concerning him in ancient history?

SEQUEL.

To shew the evidence in favour of Christianity, and the fulfilment of prophecy, both in the persecutions of the Christians and in the destruction of Jerusalem, a sketch of the history both of Christians and Jews, after the death of Christ, will form a proper conclusion to this outline of sacred history. The Gospel was early and widely spread. The "devout men of every nation under heaven," who witnessed the events of the day of Pentecost, would carry the Gospel far and wide. We know that it extended through the different parts of Judæa and Samaria; besides this, we gather from credible records that the Gospel was preached in Idumea, Syria, and Mesopotamia, by the apostle Jude; in Egypt, and other parts of Africa, by Mark, Simeon, and Jude; in Ethiopia, by the converted eunuch and Matthew; in Pontus, Galatia, and northern parts of Asia Minor, by Peter and Bartholomew; in the neighbourhood of the seven Asiatic churches, by John and Bartholomew; in Parthia, by Matthew; in Scythia, by Philip and Andrew; in Persia, by Simeon and Jude; in Media, &c. by Thomas; from Jerusalem and round about unto Illyricum, by Paul, who also published it in Italy, and probably in Spain, France, (then called Gaul,) and Britain.

When the apostle wrote his Epistle to the Romans, before he visited that city, the number of Christians there was very great; and it was no doubt greatly increased during the two years of his imprisonment, as he had liberty to preach the Gospel. Thus it is evident that a vast multitude embraced the Christian faith within a few years after the crucifixion of its Founder.

It will be recollected that Judæa was made a province of the Roman empire, as was manifested by the enrolment at the time of our Saviour's birth, (p. 155,) as also by the necessity of procuring the authority of Rome for his crucifixion, (p. 196.) The Emperor Augustus dying A. D. 14, was succeeded by Tiberius, who died A. D. 37. Caligula, who died A. D. 41, was succeeded by Nero. All these emperors were ambitious, oppressive, and cruel; but Nero exceeded all the rest. He is infamous in history, as being one of the most cruel, savage, wicked, and depraved of mankind, and is also reckoned the first persecutor of the Christian church; that is, the first who issued general laws and edicts against the Christians, and carried on a regular system of persecution. Nero was the emperor to whom St. Paul appealed under the title of Cæsar, (a title common to the Roman

emperors). Acts xxv. 11. And to him the same apostle refers, when he says, "I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion." 2 Tim. iv. 17. In the year 64 Rome was burnt. It was universally believed that Nero himself set fire to the city, and he even amused himself with the spectacle of the city in flames. He, of course, became the object of popular hatred, and to excuse himself, endeavoured to lay the blame on the Christians. Accordingly, all who were known to be Christians were seized, and treated with the most horrible cruelty. They were condemned to death, and even insulted in their sufferings. Some were sewed up in the skins of beasts, and then exposed to dogs, to be torn to pieces; others perished by fire, being sewed up in pitched garments, and then set fire to in the night time, they served as torches to the people. Nero's own gardens were made the scene of these horrible cruelties, and he himself attended the spectacle with malignant pleasure. This account is given by Tacitus, a heathen historian, who, though he hated and despised the Christians, was shocked at the injustice and cruelty with which they were treated. During this persecution the apostles, Peter and Paul, sealed the truth with their blood.

After cruelly persecuting the unoffending Christians for four years, and sacrificing many thousand lives, this barbarous monarch, impelled by a guilty and accusing conscience, put a period to his own life in the year 68.

The sufferings and persecutions endured by the early Christians, afford a very strong proof of the truth of Christianity. Living in the time of the apostles, and many of them in the days of our Lord himself, they had the very best opportunity of ascertaining whether what the apostles preached was true, whether Jesus really performed the miracles which they said He did, and whether He was put to death at Jerusalem, and rose again. Now, if there had been but a few sufferers for Christianity, we might have supposed that they were weak, credulous, and mistaken men; or that they were artful impostors, determined, if possible, at all hazards, to deceive mankind. But we cannot suppose that *thousands* of persons, of all ages and conditions, could be so weak and foolish as to suffer torments and death for the profession of a religion which they knew to be false, or which they had never inquired into, or the truth of which they were not fully convinced of on the most satisfactory and constraining evidence.

Then, again, if Christianity had not been of God, we cannot suppose that it would have stood its ground and

extended its dominion amidst all this persecution and opposition. No, as Gamaliel very wisely observed, "If this counsel or this work had been of men, it would have come to nought." But it was of God, and, therefore, man could not overthrow it. Persecutors and opposers have been found fighting against God, and sooner or later they have proved it to be a hopeless and a ruinous warfare.

The constancy of the martyrs displays not only the truth, but the excellence of the Gospel. That must be a blessed religion which could support and comfort their minds, and enable them even to rejoice and triumph in the loss of all things; and in the midst of sufferings, torments, and deaths, so horrible that the very mention of them is enough to thrill one through with horror; but in all these things they were more than conquerors, through Him that loved them. And while the peaceful circumstances we enjoy demand our lively gratitude, we should be stimulated to hold fast, prize and adorn that blessed Gospel, for the sake of which these holy men loved not their lives, unto the death.

Before entering on the narrative of the destruction of Jerusalem, the mind of the reader should be familiarized with the predictions which so exactly foretell it. They chiefly occur in the 28th chapter of Deuteronomy, the 24th of Matthew, the 13th of Mark, and the 21st of Luke. (The evangelist John does not give these predictions,—a presumptive evidence, among others, that his narrative was not written till after their fulfilment had taken place.)

It is remarkable that while much of ancient history has perished, very particular accounts are preserved of the destruction of Jerusalem; and those by a heathen (Tacitus) and by a Jewish historian. (Josephus.) It seems as if their testimony was expressly appointed by Providence to confirm each other; and both, without designing it, to testify to the minute fulfilment of prophecy, and the truth of the Christian religion.

During the reign of Nero, the Jews revolted against the Roman empire. Then begun the dreadful wars which ended in the total desolation of the Jewish nation. The Romans were a haughty, fierce, and warlike people; their standard was an eagle. (Observe the expressions of prophecy, Deut. xxviii. 49, 50; Matt. xxiv. 28.) When the Jews offended them, they came upon them with the utmost fury; and the Jews themselves acted in the most infatuated manner, as if to provoke them to the uttermost. About the time of Nero's death, the Roman army, under the command

Vespasian, and his son Titus, entered Galilee, which, after an obstinate conflict, was reduced, and the Roman army proceeded towards Jerusalem, and besieged the city. The sufferings and distresses of the miserable and obstinate Jews, during the siege of their city, were dreadful beyond description. It has been justly observed, "Perhaps the history of all other nations on earth together, does not contain so many well-authenticated instances of the most horrid effects of desperate hunger, as are found in that of the Jews, according to the most extraordinary prediction of their ancient lawgiver, Deut. xxviii. 53. Even tender mothers were reduced to the dreadful extremity of feeding on their own children. Well did this verify the words of our Lord, Matt. xxiv. 19. Titus, the commander of the Roman army, tried every method to induce the obstinate and blinded people to submit; but in vain. At length he resolved on their utter destruction, and, with a dreadful slaughter, gained the tower of Antonio, a fortification overlooking and defending the temple. In order to prevent the passage of the besiegers to the temple, their national glory and confidence, the Jews themselves set fire to the stately galleries leading to it, and then, for the first time, the daily sacrifices ceased, there being no proper person to offer them up. Soon afterwards, Titus set fire to a part of the temple, which the Jews beheld without attempting to stop it, only uttering volleys of impotent curses against the Romans. Titus was extremely desirous of preserving part, at least, of so noble an edifice, and gave orders to extinguish the fire; but the Jews having done something to provoke the Roman soldiers, one of them, of his own accord, or, as Josephus thinks, impelled by the hand of Providence, took up a blazing fire-brand, and getting on the shoulders of another man, threw it through a window, into one of the apartments that surrounded the sanctuary, and it was instantly in a blaze to the third story. All endeavours, on the part of Titus, to stop the progress of the flames, were in vain. His soldiers were intent on increasing them, or on slaughtering the Jews. Titus then entered into the sanctuary, and the **most holy place*: the remaining grandeur of which, even yet, far surpassed all that had been told him of it. He preserved the golden **candlestick*, the table of **shew bread*, the altar of **incense*, all of pure gold; and the book of the **law*, enwrapped in a rich golden tissue. When Titus quitted the sacred place, the soldiers immediately plundered what remained of its rich furniture, then set fire to the building,

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GLOSSARY.

- A. D.** The year of our Lord. Four years after the birth of Christ.
- Adopt.** To take as a son the child of another person.
- A. M.** Year of the world.
- Ancestor.** One who has gone before in the line of parentage.
- Anointed.** Set apart to office by the application of oil.
- Antediluvian.** One who lived before the flood.
- Apostle.** A person sent with commands.
- Areopagus.** The chief court of justice at Athens.
- Areopagite.** A judge in that court.
- Ark of the Covenant.** A chest, containing the covenant of God, with the Jews; kept in the Holiest of all.
- Atonement.** Something given as equivalent for an injury committed, whereby the offender and offended are reconciled.
- B. C.** Before Christ.
- Benediction.** A blessing pronounced with authority.
- Bible.** A book; called, by way of distinction, *the Book*.
- Blasphemy.** Impious or irreverent speaking of God or sacred things.
- Breastplate.** A part of the high-priest's garment, having twelve precious stones to represent the twelve tribes of Israel.
- Burnt-offering.** A sacrifice consumed by fire.
- Candlestick.** A golden lamp, with seven branches, which was kept burning in the temple.
- Canticle.** A sacred song.
- Captivity.** Subjection by war; bondage; slavery.
- Censer.** A pan, or vessel, in which to burn incense.
- Centurion.** A Roman officer over a hundred men.
- Ceremonial.** Appointed rites of religious worship.
- Cherubim.** Two golden angels, bending over the mercy-seat on the ark.
- Chronicles.** A register, or account of events in order.
- Chronological.** In order of time.
- Civil-war.** A war among the people themselves, not with any foreign enemy.
- Commonwealth.** A form of government in which all the people have equal interest.
- Congregation.** An assembly met together.
- Confirmation.** Additional proof; evidence by which facts are ascertained.
- Consecrated.** Sacred; devoted; set apart.
- Contemporary.** Living at the same time.
- Council (of the Jews.)** A court of seventy elders, over which the High-Priest presided.
- Covenant.** A contract or agreement between two parties.

Crucify. To put to death, by nailing the hands and feet to a cross set upright.

Dedication. A solemn setting apart to a Divine use.

—, Feast of. The anniversary of the dedication of the temple.

Deuteronomy. The second book of the law; or a repetition of the law.

Divination. Foretelling or guessing at future events.

Doctors. Those who studied and administered the Jewish law.

Ecclesiastes. The preacher; a serious discourse.

Eden. Pleasure; a garden of pleasure.

Elders. Judges, or chief men among the Jews.

Embalm. To fill a dead body with spices, that it may be kept from decay.

Emblem. A visible representation of a hidden meaning.

Ephod. A girdle, or tippet, worn by the High-Priest.

Epicureans. The followers of Epicurus, a man wholly given to sensual pleasures.

Epistle. A letter.

Ethics. A sect of philosophers who studied morals.

Evangelist. A writer of the history of Christ's life and death; a preacher of the Gospel.

Exodus. Going out; journeying from a place.

Exorcists. Those who pretend to drive away evil spirits.

Family. Those descended from a son of one of the twelve sons of Jacob.

Feast. A cheerful yet religious solemnity among the Jews.

Forerunner. One who goes before another, to give notice of his approach.

Frankincense. A fragrant and costly spice.

Galilean. A native of Galilee; an expression of contempt.

Genealogy. Enumeration of persons descended from each other in order of succession.

Genesis. Generation. A book treating of the production of the world.

Glory of the Lord, or Shekinah. A miraculous lustre shining over the mercy-seat, indicative of the presence of God.

Herodians. Those who sought the favour of Herod.

High-Priests. The chief priests of the Jews, always taken from the descendants of Aaron.

Holiest of all. The inmost apartment of the temple, where the ark stood, and where only the High-Priest entered, once a year.

Household. The descendants of a grandson of one of the sons of Jacob.

Idolatry. The worship of any thing as God, which is not God.

Incense. Perfume burnt in religious worship.

Inheritance. Property which descends from father to son.

Inspiration. Ideas put into the mind by the Holy Spirit, for the purpose of communicating the will of God to mankind.

Intercession. The act of one person pleading on behalf of another.

Interpretation. Explanation.

Jews. The descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, whom God chose for his own people.

Judges. Governors or commanders of Israel, raised up to defend them against their enemies.

Law. A rule of action, given by proper authority.

Lawyers. Those who professed to explain the law of God to the people.

Leprosy. One afflicted with a leprosy.

- Leprosy.** A loathsome and incurable disease.
- Leviticus.** A book containing the laws of sacrifices, which were to be offered by priests of the house of Levi.
- Magic.** Enchantment, acting by the power of evil spirits.
- Martyrdom.** Death endured as a testimony to the truth.
- Mediator.** One who goes between to reconcile two parties.
- Memorial.** Something to keep facts in remembrance.
- Mercy-seat.** The lid of the ark of the covenant in the temple.
- Messiah.** The Anointed; the Christ.
- Minister.** One who serves in an office; one who attends or supplies others.
- Miracle.** A wonder; something far above human power, and contrary to the common course of nature.
- Monument.** A memorial, that by which the memory of persons or events is preserved.
- Moral law.** A rule to direct the duties of life.
- Myrrh.** A fragrant spice.
- Mystery.** Something obscure, which has an important, though hidden meaning.
- Nazarene.** A native of Nazareth. Generally used in contempt.
- Nazarite.** One consecrated to God by a solemn vow.
- Numbers.** A book, containing lists and numbers of the tribes of Israel.
- Oracle.** Information communicated by revelation.
- Oratory.** A place for prayer.
- Ordinances.** Observances appointed and prescribed by God.
- Outer court.** A part of the temple where Gentiles worshipped.
- Parable.** A story, in which some hidden meaning is figured.
- Paradise.** A blissful place.
- Paralytic.** One afflicted with the palsy.
- Paschal.** Relating to the passover.
- Passover.** A feast observed in remembrance of the angel passing over the houses of Israel, when he destroyed the first-born of the Egyptians.
- Patriarch.** A father and ruler of a family.
- Pentateuch.** Five books.
- Pharisees.** A sect of the Jews, whose religion consisted in the observance of outward ceremonies, to the neglect of piety, justice, and benevolence.
- Posterity.** Descendants; succeeding generations.
- Predecessor.** One who filled an office before another.
- Prediction.** Prophecy; declaration of future events.
- Priests.** Those who offered sacrifices to God, and taught his laws to men.
- Proconsul.**—A Roman officer who governed a province.
- Prophecy.** To foretell future events; to preach; to instruct.
- Proselytes.** Gentiles who embraced the religion of the Jews.
- Proverbs.** Short sentences or maxims of wisdom.
- Publicans.** Those who gathered the Roman taxes.
- Psalms.** A holy song.
- Recapitulation.** Repetition of the heads of a former discourse.
- Remission.** Putting away; release from punishment.
- Revelation.** Discovery of sacred truth, by communication from heaven.
- Rulers.** The senators and magistrates of the Jews.
- Sabbath.** The seventh-day; a day of holy rest.
- Sacrifice.** Something destroyed as an atonement or propitiation.

- Sadducees.* A sect of the Jews, who denied the resurrection, and the existence of spirits.
- Sanctuary.* A holy place; the inmost part of the temple.
- Scribes.* Writers; those who wrote copies of the law for the use of the people.
- Scriptures.* Writings; sacred writings; the Bible.
- Seer.* A prophet; one who foresees.
- Sepulchre.* A place of burial.
- Shew-bread.* Loaves of bread, which were kept in the temple from one Sabbath to another.
- Sinners.* (When joined with publicans,) those grossly and notoriously vicious.
- Soothsayer.* One who foretells or prognosticates.
- Sozever.* A conjuror or enchanter.
- Stoics.* A sect of philosophers, distinguished for contempt of feeling.
- Superstition.* Unnecessary scruples in religion, or vain dependence on outward forms.
- Synagogue.* A place or assembly for religious worship among the Jews.
- Tabernacle.* A tent where the ark of the covenant was kept, and where God manifested himself to Israel.
- Tabernacles, Feast of.* A feast in remembrance of Israel dwelling in tents or booths in the wilderness.
- Talent.* A certain sum or weight of money; used also to express ability or obligation.
- Teraphim.* Sometimes household gods; sometimes divine manifestation.
- Testament.* A will or covenant; the name of each volume of the Holy Scriptures.
- Tetrarch.* Governor over a fourth part of a province.
- Thummim.* Some part of the high-priest's breast-plate, by which the divine oracle was communicated.
- Trance.* A state in which the soul is elevated above itself.
- Transfiguration.* A change of form or appearance.
- Transgression.* The violation of a law.
- Transtate.* To exchange or interpret in another language—to transport or remove to another place.
- Tribe.* The descendants of one of the twelve sons of Jacob.
- Tribute.* Payment made in acknowledgment of subjection.
- Tributary.* Paying tribute to another state.
- Type.* An emblem. That which prefigures or signifies something not seen.
- Vail.* A rich curtain in the temple, which separated the Holy from the Most Holy Place.
- Vision.* A supernatural appearance.
- Unproselyted.* Not brought to the Jewish religion.
- Urim.* See *Thummim*.
- Wedding-garment.* A garment provided for the guests at a wedding.
- Wise-men.* Persons devoted to study.
- Word.* A command, promise, or declaration of God.

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